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A SUMMARY OF UNIVERSAL HISTORY, FROM *THE CREATION* TO THE PRESENT TIME.

IN LETTERS FROM A FATHER TO HIS SON.

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SEVENTH ÆRA

OF

Univerſal Hiſtory,

Commencing at the death of Chriſt, and ending in the Year 476, when the Weſtern Roman Empire expired.

FIRST LETTER.

IN purſuing my account of the Jews, I ſhall paſs over the miraculous appearances of Chriſt after his reſurrection, the gift of tongues to his diſciples, and the preaching of

the goſpel by them, for the ſame reaſon that I omitted his particular miracles; and I again refer you to the New Teſtament.

Not very long after the death of Chriſt, one Simon collected a great number of people together, under the pretence of ſhewing them a vaſt treaſure depoſited by Moſes in Mount Gerizim. He no doubt intended an inſurrection, though moſt of thoſe aſſembled were ignorant of it; but Pilate fell on them, indiſcriminately putting the greater part to the ſword. This cruel conduct united both Jews and Samaritans in a complaint to Vitellius, the then Prefect of Syria, who had a ſuperior authority; and by him Pilate was ordered to Rome, when, it is ſaid he put an end to himſelf, rather than abide an enquiry into his conduct as governor of Judea.

Marullus, the immediate ſucceſſor of Pilate, was removed by Caius Caligula, who nominated Marcellus to that office, and ſoon after gave liberty to Agrippa the ſon of Ariſtobulus, and the grandſon of Herod the Great,

and the unfortunate Mariamne. Caligula at the ſame time conferred on him the title of king, together with the territory which formerly belonged to Philip, his half uncle. Antipas Herod who was governor of a neighbouring diſtrict had married Herodias the ſiſter of Agrippa, and at her inſtigation, he now went to Rome in purſuit of being alſo raiſed to the royal dignity. His ſolicitations ended in his baniſhment, and what had been intruſted to his care was united to the dominions of Agrippa; ſoon after which, Claudius, on being made Emperor, added Judea, Samaria, Idumea, and all that Herod his grandfather had poſſeſſed, to his tributary ſovereignty. This encreaſe of his power was unfortunate to the chriſtians, as he was their decided enemy. Amongſt thoſe who periſhed by his means, was James the ſon of Zebedee, one of the Apoſtles; and Peter would alſo have been executed, had not his priſon-doors been miraculouſly thrown open. Agrippa did not long enjoy that exaltation which he ſo groſsly

miſuſed, being ſtruck with a ſudden diſeaſe, in the preſence of a large aſſembly of his people, who were as willing to give, as he was to receive, divine honours. His death followed a few days after, and Joſephus, the celebrated Jewiſh hiſtorian, ſays, it was deemed a miraculous puniſhment for this intended idolatry.

The dominions which had been thus united under Agrippa were now converted into a Roman Province, over which Cuſpus Faddus, firſt preſided. One Theudas at this time pretended to be the expected Meſſiah, drawing after him a great multitude, by alledging he would prove his miſſion by dividing the waters of Jordan as Joſhua had done before him. Faddus however diſperſed his followers with great ſlaughter, and he himſelf was taken and beheaded.

The next governor was Tiberius Alexander an apoſtate Jew, but the care of civil and military matters only were intruſted to him; the ſuperintendance of the tempie, and religious

affairs being committed to the king of Chalcis. Well it was, that the power of Tiberius had even this limitation, for in every inſtance within his juriſdiction he conducted himſelf with the moſt wanton barbarity.

The adminiſtration of Ventidius Cumanus, his ſucceſſor, was diſturbed by ſeveral inſurrections. One of theſe had its origin in a quarrel between the Jews and Samaritans, with the latter of whom, Cumanus, in conſequence of being bribed, took part. But the Jews, who had the right ſide of the queſtion, appealing to Rome, this corrupt governor was recalled and baniſhed; and ſeveral of the leaders of the Samaritans were condemned and executed. Under Claudius Felix, who was next appointed, a number of commotions took place, in conſequence of falſe prophets and pretended miracles. But the moſt violent diſſenſion at this period, was one that aroſe between thoſe of the clergy who had filled the office of high prieſt, and thoſe who had not. The firſt contended for larger ſalaries, than the

latter, and their claims were reſiſted. This miſerable ſtate of the Province was far from being diſagreeable to Felix, who ſecretly encouraged theſe diſturbances, as they gave him an opportunity of putting many wealthy perſons to death, whoſe fortunes he confiſcated. Even aſſaſſination was winked at by this monſter, and Jonathan, a virtuous old prieſt who ventured to remonſtrate, was among the number who periſhed, during his adminiſtration.

A little before the arrival of Feſtus the next governor, Ananias had been turned out of the high prieſthood, to make room for a man named Iſhmael. This occaſioned a dreadful conteſt, as each had numerous partizans, who not only openly attacked, but privately murdered each other. Feſtus however by his exertions, during his ſhort government, reſtored things to ſome degree of order.

Agrippa, the ſon of that Agrippa who had been ſo favoured by Claudius, was at this time king of Chalcis, and as the care of the Jewiſh temple and religion was committed to him, he

now viſited Jeruſalem. Feſtus therefore brought before him the Apoſtle Paul, who had been left a priſoner by Felix, under an accuſation, of his preaching doctrines contrary to the Jewiſh religion. The reaſoning of Paul before the king was ſo concluſive, that the latter could not help exclaiming—Paul, Paul, thou almoſt perſuadeſt me to be a Chriſtian. Indeed Paul's own converſion was a very ſtrong evidence of the truth of chriſtianity. He was a man of property, of education, and of the greateſt abilities. He ſet out with being one of the bittereſt perſecutors of the chriſtians, yet was in a moment converted to be their moſt zealous ſupporter. For this faith he reſigned all worldly proſpects, and bid adieu to every gay, and ſplendid enjoyment. From being uſed to the moſt poliſhed and elegant ſociety, he became the voluntary companion of the pooreſt, and humbleſt of mankind. And after a life thus ſpent in preaching thoſe DIVINE TRUTHS, he died a martyr to the cauſe.

Albinus was the ſucceſſor of Feſtus, but before his arrival a very wicked Sadducee, named Ananus, had been raiſed by Agrippa to the high-prieſthood. At this time James, either the brother or near relation of Chriſt, was the chriſtian biſhop of Jeruſalem, and tho' remarkable for his piety and gentleneſs of manners, the Jews deſtroyed him at the inſtigation of Ananus. The latter was ſoon after removed from his office, but Judea became again diſturbed by new conteſts for the high-prieſthood.

Joſephus is at a loſs for words to deſcribe the villanies of the next governor, Ceſſinus Florus. He even entered into leagues with aſſaſſins and robbers, protecting their crimes, and ſharing in their ſpoils. The Jews, unable to bear ſuch tyranny, flew to arms, and the Romans being utterly unprepared, were every where maſſacred. Florus collected all the force in his power, but was entirely defeated, and was obliged to ſave himſelf by flight; ſoon after which all the fortreſſes of any importance fell into the hands of the conquerors.

As ſoon as this revolt was known at Rome, Veſpaſian, a very celebrated general, was ſent againſt them. He began with the ſiege of Joppa, where Joſephus commanded on the part of the Jews. After a vigorous defence it was taken by aſſault, and Joſephus being one of the few who eſcaped the ſword, was ſent priſoner to Rome. Trajan, another Roman general, was ſucceſsful in another quarter, and all Gallilee ſubmitted to him and Veſpaſian.

Tho' threatened by ſuch powerful enemies, the Jews, inſtead of uniting to repel them, became the deſtroyers of each other. One party was for peace, another for war. The conſequence was a bloody engagement, in which the latter prevailed. This was followed by a new conteſt between Simon and John, two turbulent Jews, who aſpired to the ſupreme command. Each had numerous partiſans, and another deſperate battle took place; after which John got poſſeſſion of Jeruſalem, whilſt Simon and his followers remained in the open country.

Veſpaſian no ſooner found that the Jews were engaged in ſo fatal a conflict, than he wiſely determined to remain quiet, till they had ſufficiently weakened each other. Simon at length ſo far prevailed, as to make himſelf maſter of the city of Jeruſalem, whilſt John was obliged to retreat to the temple. This edifice was uncommonly ſtrong, and tho' it was cloſely beſieged by Simon, it was not likely ſpeedily to ſurrender. Veſpaſian therefore took the advantage of their being thus circumſtanced, and entering Judea, he carried every thing before him.

In the midſt of this ſucceſs, Veſpaſian received the pleaſing intelligence of his having been raiſed to the empire of Rome. He therefore left the command to his ſon Titus, at the ſame time ordering him to commence the ſiege of Jeruſalem. This devoted city had now three parties inſtead of two, Eleazar a prieſt being at the head of the new one, and in poſſeſſion of a part of the temple. But this did not long continue, for under the ſemblance

of a treaty, Eleazar and his followers were treacherouſly ſlain by John, who repoſſeſſed himſelf of their quarters. The appearance of Titus ſo far reconciled the two ſurviving factions, that they agreed to co-operate in repulſing the Romans, tho' as occaſion offered, they at times turned their arms on each other.

Joſephus, who was a very able man, had found means to ingratiate himſelf with Veſpaſian, and having obtained his liberty, he repaired to the camp of Titus. To ſtop the ſucceſs of the Roman arms he knew was impoſſible, and therefore the only way he had of ſerving his countrymen, was to procure them good terms. With Titus's permiſſion, he now harangued them, urging them to ſurrender and benefit by the clemency of their conqueror. But inſtead of receiving this advice as coming from a friend, they impeached him as a traitor, and endeavoured to deſtroy him by ſtones which they flung from the ramparts.

Titus perceiving their obſtinacy, puſhed on the ſiege with the utmoſt vigour. To cut off

all poſſibility of their receiving ſupplies, he cauſed a high wall to be raiſed, that entirely ſurrounded the city. It was not long before this had the deſired effect, for the beſieged were at length obliged to feed on the carcaſſes of their deceaſed companions: and one horrid inſtance is particularly recorded, where a woman of noble birth was detected in devouring her own child, which ſhe had killed and dreſſed for that purpoſe. Thoſe who in this dreadful ſituation ſought to throw themſelves on the mercy of Titus, periſhed in thouſands, before he either knew of it, or could prevent it; for the Roman ſoldiers having taken it into their heads, that theſe unhappy wretches had ſwallowed their gold, they ripped up numbers, till they found that none of that precious metal was thus to be obtained. In ſhort imagination can hardly paint the horrors of this ſiege; and in it all the principal Jews were nearly extirpated, having taken refuge in Jeruſalem as the place of greateſt ſecurity. Thoſe who had become Chriſtians, however entirely eſcaped, for mindful of

the prophecies, they fled from Judea at the very commencement of the war.

Titus having now made ſufficient preparations, ordered a general aſſault, and the place was carried by ſtorm. In the firſt torrent of the beſieger's fury, they put to the ſword all who had not the good fortune to conceal themſelves. Among the latter were the two leaders, Simon and John; the firſt of whom was executed, and the other ſentenced to perpetual impriſonment. As for the city and temple, both were utterly deſtroyed, and almoſt literally ſpeaking, one ſtone was not left upon another.

During the ſiege, the Jews were obliged to give up the morning and evening ſacrifices of a lamb, from the want of that animal: and it is remarkable that this happened on the 17th day of July, which was the ſame day of the year on which their temple had been formerly deſtroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and on which the ſtatue of Jupiter had been placed in it by Antiochus Epiphanes.

Joſephus mentions a number of ſupernatural circumſtances previous to this fatal cataſtrophe to the Jewiſh nation; ſome of them ſigns in the Heavens, but others of a leſs doubtful ſignification. A few years before it, a man who called himſelf Jeſus, was conſtantly crying through the ſtreets of Jeruſalem, woe to the city---woe to the temple---a voice againſt Jeruſalem---a voice againſt the nation. He was frequently whipped to prevent his making ſuch exclamations, but he perſiſted till Titus actually beſieged the city, when a ſtone from one of the Roman engines killed him, after he had added to his uſual cry---and woe to myſelf. One night whilſt they were celebrating the Paſchal feaſt, an extraordinary fire ſhone round the altar. On another occaſion, a cow that was leading to be ſacrificed brought forth a lamb. At another of their religious feaſts, the officiating prieſts heard a ſupernatural voice exclaiming---Let us depart---let us depart---And the Eaſtern gate of the temple, which was made of braſs and of prodi-

gious weight, opened without any apparent cauſe, though it had been bolted and barred.

I have been ſomewhat particular as to theſe ſigns, becauſe they ſo much correſpond with thoſe that preceded the death of Julius Cæſar, and the ſubſequent calamities of the Roman nation: and becauſe Joſephus, who records them, and who lived at the very time, was a Jew of high birth and liberal education.

After the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, the reſt of Judea was quickly reduced, but the Jews in ſome places choſe rather to put themſelves to death, than ſurrender to the Romans. In this war it was computed that 1,337,490 fell by the ſword, beſides thoſe who periſhed by diſeaſe and famine, and upwards of 90,000 were ſold as ſlaves. The conteſt continued about three years and a half from the time it firſt commenced, and it ended in the 70th year of the Chriſtian æra.

The Jewiſh laws and rites, which had hitherto been allowed them, were now prohibited. The lands of all the principal Jews

being declared forfeited, were ſold to the beſt bidders. The purchaſe money, together with the annual revenues that had been paid to the prieſts, were applied to the Emperor's uſe: and to prevent any inſurrection in future on account of their expected Meſſiah, Veſpaſian ordered the deſcendants of David to be extirpated, which was accordingly done as far as in his power.

The remnant of the Jews from this time remained pretty quiet, till the Emperor Adrian, in the year 132, gave orders for the rebuilding of Jeruſalem, under the new name of Ælia Capitolina, and in this city a temple was to be erected to Jupiter Capitolinus, on the ſpot on which that of GOD had ſtood. This was an inſufferable inſult to their feelings, and a deſigning Jew, named Barcoquebas, taking advantage of it, declared that he was the promiſed Meſſiah. Multitudes inſtantly flocked to his ſtandard, proclaiming him King of the Jews. The new city was deſtroyed, and the colony of Romans who had ſettled there put

to the ſword. Barcoquebas then overrun Judea, and a great part of Syria, making himſelf maſter of all the principal fortreſſes; and he not only put to death the Roman people wherever he met with them, but alſo a number of Chriſtians, who refuſed to acknowledge his pretenſions.

The then Emperor, Adrian, was ſo much alarmed at theſe ſucceſſes, that he recalled his general Julius Severus from Britain, to command againſt the Jews. Though highly celebrated for his military ſkill, he found it no eaſy matter to ſubdue ſo formidable a revolt; and it alſo was three years and a half from its commencement before it was effectually got under. At length Barcoquebas himſelf was made priſoner. His adherents then diſperſed, and all the ſurviving Jews were at the mercy of Severus. As the greateſt mark of ignominy, that general ordered the ground on which their temple had ſtood to be turned up by ploughs; and ſtill further to inſult their worſhip, he cauſed the Emperor's ſtatue, to-

gether with ſome of the Roman Deities, to be placed upon its ruins. The new city was then continued, but a great part of its ſite was different from the ancient Jeruſalem. Mount Sion, where the prieſts and doctors of the law had formerly dwelt, was turned into fields of tillage, and over the gate which led to Bethlem, the marble figure of a ſwine was placed, as that animal was known to be particularly odious to this vanquiſhed people. The Jews, whether Chriſtian or otherwiſe, were according to ſome authors from henceforth forbid their country. But all agree they were prohibited from coming within ſight of where their temple had ſtood: and it is certain, that from that day to this, fewer Jews have been reſident in Judea than in any other nation that has even a claim to civilization.

Beſides thoſe inſurrections I have mentioned, the Jews in Egypt, Lybia, Cyprus, and other places, had at different times revolted, but an account of them more properly belongs to the hiſtory of thoſe countries wherein they took

place. From the time of this conqueſt of Severus, in the year 136, the Jews have ceaſed to be a nation. In the affairs of other ſtates, I ſhall indeed have occaſion to mention them, but as for themſelves, they are no longer a ſubject for hiſtory.

When we compare the laws of Moſes with thoſe of the other nations of antiquity, we muſt inſtantly ſee their ſuperiority. They were intelligible and humane. They had no tortures or lingering deaths, and their puniſhments were ſuited to their offences. Agriculture was highly encouraged. The honor of their wives and the modeſty of their daughters was ſecured, inſtead of that nakedneſs, lending of wives, and promiſcuous uſe of women, which ſome other legiſlators encouraged. Uncles did not marry their nieces—brothers their ſiſters—or fathers and mothers their children—as was practiſed by the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Perſians, and others. The Jewiſh women and children had their rights, and could neither be put to death or divorced at

pleaſure, as amongſt the Romans; and inſtead of the cruel treatment of debtors by the latter people, the Jews forgave all debts every ſeventh year. Amongſt other nations, the ſlaves were in the abſolute power of their maſters, and often experienced the moſt barbarous cruelty: but if a Jew maimed his ſlave, he muſt ſet him free; and if he intentionally killed him, the maſter was put to death. Nay, ſuch was the humanity of the Jewiſh laws, that they extended to a humane, and merciful treatment even of animals.

If you wiſh to ſee a full compariſon of the laws of Moſes with thoſe of other legiſlators, I recommend the peruſal of letters from certain Jews to Mr. Voltaire, and I ſhall here give you a few ſhort extracts from that work.—To conclude, Sir, every part of the Jewiſh legiſlature diſplays the high and divine wiſdom of the legiſlator. Its doctrines are rational and ſublime, its religious and moral precepts holy and pure; its political, military, and civil laws are founded in reaſon; all of them in ſhort are admira-

bly ſuited to the deſigns and views of the legiſlator, to the circumſtances of time, place, climate, to the inclinations of the Hebrews, and to the manners of the neighbouring nations. There is nothing in this legiſlature that contradicts the laws of nature, or of virtue. Every thing here breathes juſtice, piety, honeſty, benevolence.

As for our parts, Sir, when we conſider the juſt cenſures that have been paſſed on ancient and modern governments; when we reflect on the baneful ſyſtems ſet up in ages paſt, and in this one too, by philoſophers; when we ſee the providence of God, his juſtice, even his exiſtence conteſted; fatality introduced, liberty deſtroyed, the land-mark of right or wrong daringly torn up, or placed with uncertainty by theſe pretenders to wiſdom; man degraded, all the bonds of ſociety diſſolved, vain imaginations and racking doubts ſubſtituted in the place of the moſt comfortable and ſalutary truths; when we ſee theſe things, our ſpirit is ſtirred up at all thoſe errors, and we cannot

help thinking ourſelves happy in having been preſerved from them by ſuch reaſonable and holy laws. Oh, Iſrael, happy are we, for the things that are pleaſing to GOD are made known unto us; he hath not dealt ſo with any nation.

You are, in reading theſe paſſages, to remember they are Jews, or aſſume the character of Jews, who write them; and for my own part, I perfectly agree with thoſe authors, as to the civil ſuperiority of that nation over all others ancient or modern. As to religion, I alſo think the Moſaic is only excelled by the purer and more ſpiritual worſhip enjoined by Chriſtianity.

Of the Moabites, Ammonites, Amalekites, Edomites, Canaanites and Philiſtines, they had ceaſed to be known as nations, before the utter diſperſion of the Jews; their countries being from time to time annexed to that which goes under the general name of Paleſtine. And as the progreſs of Chriſtianity will come in more correctly in my account of the Roman empire, I will here cloſe this letter.

SECOND LETTER.

I SHALL confine myſelf in this letter to thoſe countries not compriſed within the bounds of the Roman empire, at the death of Chriſt.

The kingdom of Pontus was made a province under the emperor Nero. Theſe of Armenia Minor and Commagena under Veſpaſian, Armenia Major, Meſopotamia and Colchis by Trajan. Edeſſa had its own kings till Severus reduced it. That part of Africa called Mauritania was made two provinces under Claudius; and any thing worth mentioning as to theſe countries will be touched on in my next letter.

During the period I now treat of, the only ſtates recognized by the hiſtorians of thoſe times that had not been part of the Roman empire, were Boſporus, Iberia, Albania, a part of Bactria, Characene, Chalcidine, what had been the Parthian, and which had latterly be-

come again the Perſian empire, Arabia, Ethiopia and Ireland; and of theſe there is nothing worthy of attention except of the Arabs, Parthians, Perſians, Ethiopians and Iriſh.

There is no account of the northern part of Europe, now known under the names of the kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden, Ruſſia, Pruſſia, Poland and Lithuania, till long after this æra, except that they were inhabited by Barbarians, whoſe principal tribes were called Scythians, Sarmatians and Tartars, and as to the reſt of Aſia and Africa hiſtory was totally ſilent.

The Arabs never were conquered by any nation, though parts of their territories have ſometimes been taken from them. They acknowledged only one God, but they ſo far were idolaters as to worſhip the ſtars and angels. Their chief virtues were hoſpitality, an attention to their word, and affection to their friends and relations: but on the other hand they were addicted to rapine and revenge. They had little knowledge of the arts or literarature, but were very fond of poetry. The

Arabs were of two lines of deſcent; the one from Joktan the ſon of Eber; the other from a daughter of that line, and Iſhmael the ſon of Abraham; and theſe were again ſubdivided into different tribes, the moſt diſtinguiſhed of which was that called the Saracens. In the reign of the Emperor Claudius, the little kingdom of Emeſſa, which had before continued under its own kings, was ſubdued by the Arabs. Ethiopia had ſome wars with the Romans, but retained its independence. Parthia after the reign of Auguſtus, had annexed to it, a part of Bactria, the ancient kingdom of Media, and Adiabene the moſt fertile part of Aſſyria. It in itſelf compriſed the ancient Perſia, beſides ſome other provinces. And as what relates to it will chiefly fall in with the Roman hiſtory, I ſhall in this place very lightly touch on it.

A number of wicked and inſignificant princes ſwayed the ſceptre of Parthia, and various civil wars afflicted their ſubjects, from the death of Chriſt, to the year 230, when

that Empire ended, and the Perſian was reſtored. This event took place in the reign of Artabanus who had ſuffered ſeverely in his conteſt with the Romans, and which afforded an opportunity to one Artaxerxes, a Perſian of mean origin, but who had raiſed himſelf by his valor, to revolt. He pointed out to his countrymen, that Empire had formerly belonged to them, and having thus rouſed their love of dominion, he marched againſt Artabanus, whom he defeated and made priſoner. Thus ended the line of the Arſacidæ, and all thoſe countries over which that unfortunate Prince had ruled, immediately acknowledged Artaxerxes; who now took the title of king of kings. One of his firſt acts was to demand of the Emperor Alexander Severus, all that had formerly belonged to Cyrus the Great. This produced ſeveral wars with the Romans, which will come in elſewhere; but no important change was effected by any of them.

I ſhall not plague you with a liſt of kings, of whom nothing memorable is recorded. Suffice it to ſay, that Sapor the 2d during a long reign extended the Perſian Empire towards Tartary and India, but diſgraced himſelf by ſeveral perſecutions of the Chriſtians. He died in the year 380, and two or three kings intervened between him and the reign of Iſdegerdes, who aſcended the throne in the year 401. This Prince was one of the beſt of his race, and lived on ſuch terms of friendſhip with the Emperor Arcadius, that the latter appointed him guardian to his ſon Theodoſius: and during a reign of 21 years, Iſdegerdes tolerated and granted many favors to the Chriſtians in his dominions. His ſucceſſor Varanes the 5th was of a different ſpirit, and numbers flying for protection to the Romans, it occaſioned a new war between thoſe Empires, which ended in a treaty by which the Perſians engaged to drop their perſecutions of the Chriſtians. There is nothing worth attending to in the two next reigns of

Varanes the 6th and Peroſes, the latter of whom it is generally agreed, was on the throne, when the weſtern Empire expired.

The only country I have now to treat of, before I proceed to the Roman Empire, is Ireland. The beſt opinion ſeems to be, that its firſt inhabitants were Celtes who paſſed into it from ſome part of Great Britain. This is probable from the vicinage, and is ſtrongly confirmed from the ſame druidical worſhip being practiſed in both iſlands, and from the ſame reſpect being paid to their bards. The Iriſh and Celtic languages are alſo nearly alike, and were undoubtedly of the ſame origin.

But whoever firſt peopled Ireland, it is certain that a large colony under Mileſius arrived from Spain prior to the birth of Chriſt. They muſt alſo have been ſuperior to the inhabitants they found there, either by numbers, or what is more likely, by greater ſkill in the art of war; for kings of the Mileſian race from thenceforth became the monarchs of

Ireland. Tara was made their capital, and the county of Meath in which it was ſituated was allotted for the maintenance of the royal dignity. Primogeniture was not however attended to in the ſucceſſion, for though the monarch muſt be deſcended from Mileſius, the ſtates of the kingdom might fix on any male of that line, which they thought proper. Beſides this king over the whole iſland, there were many petty kings, whoſe numbers and ſucceſſions fluctuated, according to the events of the civil wars, in which they were perpetually engaged.

There are ſome who contend for a Phœnician colony having ſettled in Ireland previous to that from Spain. Certain it is they had a written code of laws, long before the inhabitants of Great Britain, which argues an earlier acquaintance with a poliſhed nation. This code known by the name of the Brehon law, continued till the Engliſh eſtabliſhed their authority; and it is ſingular that the feudal tenures, ſo general in Europe in the middle

centuries, never found their way into Ireland.

The moſt uncommon part of the Brehon law, was what was termed Taniſtry, and gavelkind. Taniſtry only related to the great families, and by it the whole landed eſtate of each family, was centered in one of its male deſcendants; but on the death of each reſpective poſſeſſor, the ſept or family had the right of fixing on him that was moſt agreeable to them, without regard to the order of birth. By the law of Gavelkind, which was for the inferior orders, the property went amongſt all the male deſcendants of the laſt poſſeſſor ſhare and ſhare alike, and baſtards were equally entitled with thoſe who were legitimate. All the deſcendants were however firſt to throw into the common ſtock whatever property they had, and then the caufinny or head of the family made a new diſtribution. Theſe Brehon laws, beſides ſettling how property ſhould go, likewiſe fixed the puniſhments of offences; but they

did not protect the poor from the tyranny of their ſuperiors, and ſlavery was permitted. There ſeems however to have been a law, by which the ſlave was emancipated after a ſeven years ſervitude.

Some attempts had been made to eſtabliſh chriſtianity in this country, but with little ſucceſs till the arrival of St. Patrick. This ſingular man was by birth a Scotchman, and in ſome war between the two countries had been taken priſoner by the Iriſh when only 16 years old, and kept in ſlavery for ſeven years. Soon after his return to Scotland, he is ſaid to have dreamed that he heard theſe words, "The voice of the Iriſh," and alſo that that people had intreated him to come and walk amongſt them. But Patrick ſpent a great part of his life in foreign countries before he obeyed this call, and was of the age of 60 when he arrived in Ireland in the year 430.

Patrick and thoſe who aſſiſted him completed the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity in the year 455, for though ſome pagans might then

remain, it was at that period acknowledged by all the kings and principal men, and alſo by the great body of the people. This was likewiſe a remarkable year, for ſome other regulations, Patrick in fact directing the conduct of Logary, the then monarch. Thoſe who were chiefly converſant in the antiquities and hiſtory of Ireland were called together, and a digeſt was made from their information which got the appellation of "The great Antiquity;" of this, many copies were taken, and entruſted to the care of the biſhops throughout the kingdom; ſome of which are ſtill extant. Logary alſo called a general aſſembly, which made ſome wholeſome alterations in the laws, and likewiſe inſerted the chief articles, of the great Antiquity, in the royal Pſaltery. This general aſſembly conſiſted of the petty kings, the nobles, biſhops, chief clergy, and the principal gentry.

Patrick made Armagh the chief ſeat of the Iriſh church, which it ſtill continues to be; and he founded ſeveral ſeminaries in that

city, for the education of youth. From the rapidity of his ſucceſs in converting the Iriſh, or perhaps from other cauſes, Ireland now got the name of the ſacred iſland, or iſland of ſaints; and the Apoſtolic crown from thenceforth was worn by its monarchs. Indeed all the writers of Patrick's life, record his having the power of working miracles, and in particular, that of baniſhing every thing of the ſerpent kind from the land. That no ſerpent or poiſonous animal is to be found there, is certain: and when I reflect that they are common in the neighbouring iſland, and all over the continent of Europe, I can ſee no better way of accounting for it. As for Patrick himſelf, it is univerſally allowed, that added to very ſuperior courage and ability, he poſſeſſed all thoſe milder virtues, which ſo eminently ſhone forth, in the days of primitive chriſtianity.

LETTER THIRD.

THE Emperor Tiberius, of whom I have ſaid all that is neceſſary in my laſt æra, was ſucceeded by Caius Caligula, the ſon of Germanicus. In the commencement of his reign he ingratiated himſelf highly with the Roman people, by the moſt magnificent ſhews and entertainments, and by a general attention to the welfare of the Empire. At the end of eight months he was, however, ſeized with a dangerous illneſs, and on his recovery he appeared to have abſolutely changed his nature. Before it, his modeſty had made him decline the titles of the preceding Emperors, but he now aſſumed them in their fulleſt extent; and with them an infernal and bloody diſpoſition.

Tiberius, the ſon of Druſus, had been appointed his partner in the Empire, but being

much younger, had as yet taken no ſhare in the exerciſe of that power. He was now informed that the only way to avoid a painful death, was to be his own executioner; and the unfortunate youth accordingly diſpatched himſelf. Thoſe who were ſuppoſed to be his warm friends, were then compelled to exhibit themſelves as gladiators, and numbers of them were killed and wounded. One of the next victims was Antonia, his own mother, the daughter of Marc Antony and niece of Auguſtus, who diſpatched herſelf by his orders.

It would be both uſeleſs and diſguſting to give you a full detail of his multiplied barbarities; but I ſhall ſelect a few, that you may perceive the abject ſtate into which the Romans had fallen. On one occaſion, where an exhibition of wild beaſts, who were to be engaged by perſons condemned, was prepared; it appearing that the criminals were too few for the entertainment, a number of the ſpectators were thrown in by his orders, their tongues

being firſt plucked out. At ſome executions, parents were obliged to aſſiſt in putting their children to death; and Caligula, who delighted in attending ſcenes of blood, frequently deſired the executioners to make thoſe who were to ſuffer, feel that they were dying. His luſts were carried to the ſame exceſs, as his cruelties, and his own ſiſter was one of it's objects. His impiety was ſuited to his conduct, and he frequently aſſumed the appearances of the Demi Gods—the Great Gods—and the Female Deities. At length, he cauſed a temple to be erected to himſelf, with a number of prieſts and prieſteſſes, who ſacrificed the moſt expenſive animals at his ſhrine. A favorite horſe, named Incitatus, was inrolled in the number of his new-appointed prieſthood. The moſt ſumptuous ſtables, and attendance, were provided for this animal, who was ſometimes fed at Caligula's own table, gilt oats being prepared for him, together with the moſt delicious wines to waſh them down: and the Emperor

declared, that on a future occaſion, he would appoint Incitatus one of the conſuls.

Beſides the Temple and it's rights which I have mentioned, an order was iſſued that Caligula's image ſhould be worſhipped throughout the Empire. With this, the Jews at Alexandria abſolutely refuſed to comply; and Flaccus, the governor of that city, who hated them, thereupon put numbers to death. At the interceſſion of Agrippa, the grandſon of Herod the Great, and who was a favorite with Caligula, this perſecution of the Jews was ſtopped, and Flaccus recalled. It was, however, in ſome degree again renewed, and Philo, a Jew of great learning and ability, was ſent to Rome to plead their cauſe. To him was oppoſed Apion, a pagan, who was alſo poſſeſſed of great parts and information: but the Emperor was too much engaged in his horrid purſuits, to pay much attention to either.

Caligula now amuſed himſelf by making a bridge of veſſels ſome miles in length, from

one point of a bay in Campania to the other, which he accompliſhed at great expence. This, he firſt paſſed over by day, and then by night, attended by the principal Romans, and on the latter occaſion, the immenſe number of flambeaux had a moſt brilliant effect. Another day was ſpent in eating and drinking in temporary houſes, erected on the centre of the bridge. This ſcene was cloſed by numbers of all ranks being thrown into the ſea, by order of the tyrant, many of whom periſhed. By the various expenditures of Caligula, he in about two years and a half diſſipated what would amount to eighteen millions ſterling of the preſent Britiſh currency.

Having thus ſquandered all that Tiberius had amaſſed, every thing became a ſubject of taxation. His own palace was turned into a brothel and gaming-houſe, which men of rank from policy attended, and the very whores paid a part of their profits to the Emperor. By the

Law of Majeſty, even a diſreſpectful word was death, and the forfeiture of the culprit's eſtate was the conſeqnence. Informers being encouraged, this proved a moſt fruitful ſource of revenue, and many perſons were executed even without the form of a trial. Nothing could ſatiate this monſter's thirſt of blood, and on one occaſion he expreſſed a wiſh, that the Roman people had but one neck, that he might exterminate them at a blow.

Caligula now reſolved to aſſume the character of a hero, marching into Gaul at the head of 200,000 men. There he practiſed a variety of mockeries on war. One of his exploits was marching to the coaſt oppoſite Great Britain, and on his forces being drawn up, he gave the ſound for a charge, on which the men, as had been previouſly ordered, gathered all the cockle-ſhells they could find on the ſea-ſhore. He then ſaid, he had ſubdued the ocean; and for

it and ſimilar victories, an ovation was celebrated on his return to Rome.

Whilſt in Gaul he put to death two men of diſtinction named Lentulus and Lepidus, and baniſhed his own ſiſters, either for a real or ſuppoſed conſpiracy. The effects and jewels of theſe ſiſters were then ſold by auction, and being himſelf the auctioneer, the Gauls gave whatever price he choſe for them. Finding this mode ſo productive, he ordered the furniture and other articles from the Imperial palace at Rome, which he diſpoſed of in the ſame manner. Thoſe among the Gauls who were moſt wealthy he put to death, as he likewiſe did Ptolemy king of Mauritania, whom he had invited to his court. This prince was the ſon of Juba, and a daughter of Marc Antony by the infamous Cleopatra, and Auguſtus had given his father that kingdom, which was now divided into the provinces of Tingitana and Mauritania Cæſarienſis. Caligula enriched himſelf by ſeizing on the property of all thoſe

whom he cauſed to be executed; and what he procured by this, and his other vile means, he laviſhed in the moſt unmeaning extravagancies. He threw quantities of money from time to time among the people—diſſolved large pearls in vinegar—gave diſhes of pure gold as preſents to his gueſts—and got rid of his wealth by other ſimilar follies.

Caligula had once thought proper to celebrate an ovation on his return from Gaul, as I have before obſerved; but he was extremely offended at the ſenate for not voting him a triumph. This happened merely from their not knowing he wiſhed it; but notwithſtanding he muſt have known it was ſo, he reſolved to exterminate them by degrees, and numbers were cut off during the few months he was afterwards ſuffered to live. He was at length diſpatched by Caſſius Chærea, (a tribune of the prætorian cohort) on his return from the theatre, where ſports were exhibiting in honor of Auguſtus.

The people were ſtill in the theatre when the news of his death was promulgated; and in the uproar that followed, ſeveral perſons of rank were put to death by a body of German guards, with whom the deceaſed Emperor was a favorite. The ſenate would now have reſtored the ancient liberty of Rome, had it not been overawed by the ſoldiery, and deſerted by the people. Claudius, the uncle of Caligula, was therefore forced to aſſume the purple, and in return, to give the guards fifty great ſeſterces per man. The new Emperor was grandſon to Marc Antony and Octavia, and alſo grandſon to the Empreſs Livia, Druſus, her ſon, being his father.

Chærea, and a few of the conſpirators, having been put to death, the reſt were pardoned. The taxes were immediately lowered, and retribution made to many, who had ſuffered in the laſt reign. The law of majeſty was alſo ſuppreſſed; and the people had at firſt great reaſon to rejoice in the elevation of Claudius.

But he was of ſo timid a diſpoſition, and ſo weak a capacity, that he would hardly be perſuaded to go to the ſenate-houſe, becauſe Julius Cæſar had periſhed there. From the ſame cauſe, every houſe he viſited, and every perſon who approached him, were ſearched for arms. Such a man could not avoid falling into the ſchemes of thoſe around him; and he was in fact ſolely directed by his Empreſs Meſſalina, and Calliſtus, Narciſſus and Pallas, who were his three favorites.

Meſſalina, who was the moſt abandoned of all women, having in vain ſolicited the embraces of her ſtep-father Appius Silanus, falſely accuſed him of deſigns on the Empire. In this ſhe was joined by Narciſſus, and the terrified Claudius conſented to his execution. After this, ſome real conſpiracies followed, and thoſe concerned were put to death, except ſuch as were able to bribe the Empreſs and the favorites. Several innocent perſons alſo ſuffered, that their eſtates might be forfeited.

The exceſſes of Meſſalina increaſed with her years, and many perſons of diſtinction ſuffered by her contrivance. Amongſt theſe was M. Vinicius, the brother-in-law of Claudius, whom ſhe cauſed to be poiſoned, for being deaf to her overtures. At length, the extent of her wickedneſs accompliſhed her own deſtruction. Whilſt the Emperor remained at Oſtia, Caius Silius, the handſomeſt man at Rome, and her favorite paramour, prevailed on Meſſalina to publicly marry him, thereby hoping to raiſe himſelf to the Empire: but, inſtead of inſtantly removing Claudius, the Empreſs, who conceived him ſafe in the hands of her creatures, gave herſelf up to the moſt voluptuous celebration of her nuptials. Narciſſus and the other favorites ſaw, that their power would be gone, if her ſchemes ſucceeded. They therefore informed Claudius of what was paſſing, on which he naturally aſked with aſtoniſhment, if he was yet Emperor. They then accompanied him to the prætorian camp near Rome, and the Em-

preſs, abandoned by all, in vain attempted an interview, which ſhe ſought, by getting herſelf conveyed in a dung cart, the only carriage ſhe could procure. Her death, and that of her chief gallants, ſoon after followed.

Though Claudius had declared againſt any future marriage, his favorite Pallas found means to make him change his mind in favour of Agrippina, the daughter of Germanicus. She had firſt married Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, by whom ſhe had a ſon named Nero. Her ſecond huſband ſhe had murdered to poſſeſs his riches, having firſt prevailed on him to make a will in her favor. Added to this, and other crimes, ſhe almoſt equalled Meſſalina in lewdneſs. Such was the woman whom this weak Emperor choſe to ſhare his high ſtation; though there was an additional objection, that of her being his niece, which had hitherto been contrary to the laws of Rome.

Agrippina, from the firſt, ſeems to have planned the elevation of her ſon Nero, for ſhe

immediately broke off a match between Claudius's daughter Octavia and Lucius Silanus, to whom ſhe had been betrothed. Silanus thereupon thought it beſt to put himſelf to death: and Nero, who was only twelve years old, was married to Octavia. The next ſtep was to get him adopted by Claudius, which ſhe accompliſhed with the help of Pallas; after which Claudius's own ſon, a child of nine years old, was almoſt totally neglected.

Towards the cloſe of his reign, Claudius gave a magnificent, but horrid exhibition to the people. This was an engagment between one hundred gallies equally divided; one being called the Sicilian, and the other the Rhodian, fleet. They had on board 19,000 perſons, who had been condemned to die, in one part of the Empire or the other. After they had fought till moſt of them were ſlain, the remainder were pardoned. The Romans were likewiſe, at the ſame time, entertained with ſeveral ſhews of gladiators.

The chief public events of this reign, were the reducing Mauritania, which had revolted on being turned (as you have before ſeen) into two Roman provinces, and the conqueſts made in England. Julius Cæſar had rather nominally, than really, annexed it to the Roman Empire; and Claudius, at the inſtigation of ſome Britiſh fugitives, ſent an army into it. under the command of Plautius. The Emperor ſoon after followed in perſon, and his arms were ſo ſucceſsful, that he not only triumphed on his return, but both he and his ſon, took the additional name of Britannicus.

Oſtorius Scopula to whom the command in Britain was left, had ſtill further ſucceſs, driving the natives who oppoſed him, entirely out of the ſouthern part, and obliging them to take ſhelter in Wales. There they again made head under Caractacus, one of the braveſt of the Britiſh princes: but he was at length defeated, and being afterwards betrayed into the hands of the Romans, he,

together with his queen, his children, and ſome of his principal followers, were tranſmitted to Rome. When introduced to the preſence of Claudius, he behaved with ſo much dignified reſignation and firmneſs, that the Emperor generouſly reſtored not only him, but thoſe who had accompanied him, to liberty.

Nero on his arriving at his 16th year, conſummated his nuptials with Octavia, and Claudius did not long ſurvive it. He had latterly expreſſed more kindneſs than uſual for his ſon, the young Britannicus, and on Claudius's being taken ill ſoon after, it was ſuppoſed, his death was haſtened by poiſon, adminiſtered by the Empreſs. Claudius was certainly of a humane diſpoſition, but he was ſo completely the dupe of thoſe around him, that many infamous acts were ſanctioned by his name: and during a reign of 14 years, 35 ſenators, and upwards of 300 knights, were put to death; moſt of whom periſhed without any juſt cauſe.

The Prætorian guards having eſtabliſhed the election of Nero, on his promiſing the ſame donative, as had been given by the laſt Emperor, it was every where elſe confirmed. Agrippina however having apprehenſions that Junius Silanus, a great grandſon of Auguſtus, might aſpire to the purple, ſhe had him cut off. Narciſſus, whom I have before mentioned, knowing he was no favorite with her, and expecting a death of pain, put an end to himſelf; and many others would have fallen to her cruelty and jealouſy, but for the influence of Burrhus and Seneca. The firſt of theſe was Nero's inſtructor in military affairs, and the latter in eloquence, and other branches of literature.

Nero commenced his reign by many generous acts, both public and private. He alſo enacted ſome wholeſome laws, which was probably owing to the influence of his two tutors. They endeavoured as much as poſſible to keep him out of the hands of his mother: but to gratify her they conſented that Claudius

ſhould be deified with a temple, prieſts, &c. and from this period to the time of Conſtantine the Great, the ſame thing was done, at the death of almoſt every Emperor.

Nero, who hated his wife Octavia, now became enamoured of a female ſlave, named Acte. This paſſion, his tutors encouraged, that they might through her prevent the influence of his mother. This was what Agrippina dreaded, and having in vain exerted her rage, ſhe tried what could be done by compliance. She had acquired immenſe treaſures, which ſhe offered her ſon the command of, at the ſame time propoſing that Acte ſhould reſide in her palace. Nero, or his tutors, however ſaw her drift, and this propoſal was not complied with.

The diſmiſſion of Pallas the paramour of Agrippina, who had amaſſed upwards of ſeven millions ſterling by being at the head of the treaſury, now rouſed her reſentment beyond all bounds. In the firſt burſt of her fury, ſhe threatened to dethrone Nero, and place Britannicus in his ſtead. This occaſioned the al-

moſt inſtant death of that youth, Nero cutting him off by poiſon, and Agrippina at firſt was ordered from court, but was ſoon after allowed to return.

Otho, one of Nero's favourites, had a miſtreſs named Poppœa, remarkable for her beauty and debaucheries. Captivated by her charms, Nero removed his rival to Spain, where he made him governor of Luſitania, and Poppœa ſoon gained a prodigious aſcendency over him. This occaſioned a freſh and violent conteſt between Nero and his mother, during which, it is ſaid, that horrid woman would have prevailed on her ſon, when he was intoxicated, to ſleep with her, had not Seneca critically interfered. Be that as it may, Nero now gave orders for her death; and on the approach of the executioners, ſhe deſired them to rip up the belly which had carried ſuch a monſter. Both Burrhus and Seneca were acquainted with the commands of Nero, but perhaps it was not in their power to prevent the execution of Agrippina, and

this I think the moſt probable, at leaſt as to Seneca, from his ſubſequent fate and conduct.

Nero juſtified this horrid act, by declaring his own ſafety required it, and the ſenate decreed a public thankſgiving to the gods, for his imaginary eſcape: but a conſciouſneſs of his guilt, for a time, rendered him miſerable.

On the death of Burrhus, who was captain of the guards, two perſons were appointed, inſtead of one, to hold that important office. Much about the ſame period Nero was alſo deprived of the aſſiſtance of Seneca, who ſolicited and obtained leave to retire. The horrid nature of Nero now burſt forth without reſtraint, and Tigellinus one of the new Prætorian commanders, having a heart equally deteſtable, immediately became his favourite. One of their firſt acts, was the divorce of Octavia, to make room for Poppœa, and ſoon after the unhappy daughter of Claudius was put to death, on a falſe charge of inſi-

delity. About this time Pallas died, and the Emperor ſeiſed on his immenſe treaſures.

Nero expreſſed great joy, on the new Empreſs being delivered of a daughter; but her death ſoon after, which it is ſaid was occaſioned by a kick he gave her, ſeverely afflicted him. He immediately ordered her deification, and then to divert his grief, various exhibitions took place. Amongſt others, there were great ſhews of gladiators, in which both ladies and gentlemen appeared, as combatants. This was a new ſcene, and Nero, inſtead of ſcattering money among them as was cuſtomary on former occaſions, threw tickets containing grants of various valuable things, which were accordingly given to the fortunate poſſeſſors.

The exceſſes which the Emperor now ran into, are almoſt incredible. He gave great entertainments at which not only the debauched women of every rank were preſent, but alſo the moſt notorious catamites. To one of the latter Nero was afterwards publicly mar-

ried, being firſt dreſſed in the garb of a woman; and to another, he performed a ſimilar ceremony, changing places, and appearing in his uſual dreſs, whilſt his infamous companion aſſumed the appearance of a female.

In the year 64, and the eleventh of Nero's reign, Rome was nearly conſumed to aſhes. In the midſt of the conflagration, this abominable Emperor amuſed himſelf in his private theatre, by ſinging the deſtruction of Troy, and coupling it with the preſent calamity. From this and other circumſtances it is therefore pretty generally agreed, that the fire ſecretly originated by his orders; and the motive is ſaid to have been, that he might be better accommodated. This is ſtrengthened, by his immediately beginning a palace on a prodigious ſcale, and which was called the golden palace, from the vaſt quantity of that metal with which it was ornamented. The pleaſure grounds belonging to it were proportioned to the building; and when all was

finiſhed at an enormous expence, Nero obſerved, he began to lodge like a man.

Some ſuſpicions ariſing as to the ſhare Nero had in the conflagration, he reſolved to throw the odium on the Chriſtians, many of whom, were then inhabitants of Rome. In this the heathen Prieſts moſt heartily joined, and when Nero gave orders for the Chriſtians being ſeiſed and tortured to death, he was obeyed with the utmoſt alacrity. Many ſuffered in the Emperor's own gardens, where he entertained himſelf and the pagan multitude, with deviſing unheard of kinds of death. Some were covered with the ſkins of wild beaſts, and devoured by dogs. Others had their garments ſtuffed with combuſtible matter, which being ſet fire to, ſoon deprived them of life. Beſides theſe, many different cruelties were practiſed, and ſpreading from the capital, this perſecution which was called the firſt general one, extended into different parts of the Empire. But thoſe who ſuffered on this occaſion being for the moſt part poor,

very little money thereby came to the Emperor. He therefore pillaged the heathen temples, and by doing ſo, and other rapacities, he acquired what anſwered his prodigality.

Struck by ſome ill omens, Nero conſulted an aſtrologer, who adviſed him to avert them, by ſome great maſſacre. In purſuance of this advice, he reſolved to extirpate the ſenatorial order, which being known, or ſuſpected, occaſioned a conſpiracy headed by Caius Piſo. It was detected, and amongſt the numbers who periſhed on that occaſion, were Seneca, and Lucan the Poet. Whatever exceptions may be made to the firſt part of Seneca's life, from the time he went into retirement it was truly exemplary: and his moral writings, are to this day, very juſtly admired.

Nero extended his cruelty to the children, and even to the friends, of thoſe he had puniſhed as conſpirators. And having long felt, that nothing could ſecure him, but the ſoldiery who were immediately around him; he gave the Prætorians a profuſion of money, whilſt

he at the ſame time indulged them in all their exceſſes. As to the ſenate which was the creature of his authority, they offered thanks to the gods, for his eſcape from the deſigns of his enemies. It had indeed heen ſo completely venal from the uſurpation of Auguſtus, that it knew no will but that of the reigning Emperor; and ſo it continued, with ſcarcely, if any exception, to the total deſtruction of the Weſtern Roman Empire.

Nero had long aimed at theatric fame, and at length he publicly contended on the ſtage, for prizes, which he was ſure to obtain. On theſe occaſions it was well underſtood that the preſence of every perſon of rank was expected, and to ſhow any mark of being tired was highly reſented and ſometimes puniſhed with death. To depart was impoſſible, and as the Emperor occaſionally took it into his head to perform a day and night together, there were inſtances of women being actually delivered in the theatre.

Many perſons now ſuffered death merely on account of their virtues, which he deemed a tacit cenſure on his crimes. Thraſæa Pætus was executed for expreſſing his diſapprobation of the baſeneſs of the ſenate, and he met his end with the moſt undaunted firmneſs. To other executions, Nero added that of a favorite of his own. This was Petronius Arbiter, a man remarkable for his elegance in the moſt obſcene and vicious purſuits, and who is ſuppoſed to have been the author of ſome fragments that bear and diſgrace his name. His death was owing to the intrigues of Tigellinus, who was jealous of the favor in which he was held by Nero.

The Emperor now declared he would march againſt the Parthians, ordering, among other levies, a legion, the leaſt man of which ſhould be ſix feet high. But, inſtead of going to Parthia, he went to the Olympic Games, where he obtained the prizes for muſic and charioteering. He then diſplayed his ſkill in the chief cities of Greece, calling on the moſt celebrated

performers to oppoſe him. None, however, choſe to exert themſelves; particularly after he had cauſed an actor to be ſtrangled on the ſtage, for refuſing to lower his voice. He of courſe proved every where ſucceſsful, in conſequence of which, he ordered all the ſtatues and trophies, formerly raiſed to others, to be thrown down: and the Roman ſenate, by his orders, had thanks offered to the gods, throughout the Empire, on account of his victories.

In return for the flattery he received in Greece, he took off their taxes, and allowed them to be governed by their own laws: but the conſumption and extortion of his followers, did the Grecians much more miſchief, than any advantage they derived from the Emperor. Before he left Greece, he alſo made himſelf maſter of moſt of its riches, by putting many of its principal people to death, under one pretence or other, and then ſeizing their property as forfeited: and as to thoſe who eſcaped with life, he found means to extort from them all the wealth they poſſeſſed.

Narrowly eſcaping being drowned on his return from Greece, he maſſacred numbers who were with him, alledging they had rejoiced at the danger to which he had been expoſed. Having made good his landing in Italy, he was preceded by 1800 perſons, carrying as many crowns of gold, which he had obtained as prizes in his late exhibitions: and on his arrival at Rome, he lived by a particular regimen, to improve his voice; as he continued to perform in public.

The extortions and cruelties of Nero had hitherto raiſed up ſome trivial and impotent attempts againſt him. A truly formidable one now took place under Julius Vindex, the governor of Celtic Gaul, and in this conſpiracy, Galb aand Otho, who commanded the forces in Spain and Luſitania, were involved. But, before a junction could be formed, Vindex put an end to himſelf, after being defeated by Rufus Virginius, the governor of Upper Germany. The victorious army would have inſtantly raiſed their leader to the imperial dignity, but

Virginius declined it; declaring he thought the ſenate alone competent to appoint to that office.

The citizens of Rome encouraged by theſe tranſactions in the provinces, at length roſe againſt the tyrant; and Nero not being capable of any manly exertion, the prætorians, at the inſtigation of Nymphidius and Sabinus their commanders, declared for Galba. The ſenate then ventured to condemn Nero, who, thus deſerted by all, after ſhewing many inſtances of the meaneſt puſillanimity, attempted to cut his throat, which he at length accompliſhed with the aid of one of his freedmen. This infamous monſter had been ſuffered to reign for the ſpace of fourteen years, which of itſelf points out the horrid and abject ſtate to which the Romans were reduced.

The principal Authors who flouriſhed in the Roman Empire from the death of Chriſt, to that of Nero, were Silius Italicus, Lucan, Perſius and Petronius Arbiter in poetry, Seneca, who was particularly celebrated for his moral writings, Philo, diſtinguiſhed for his writings againſt

Chriſtianity; and Aurelius Cornelius Celſus, memorable for his treatiſe on medicine. Beſides theſe, Columella, Onkelos a Jewiſh Rabbi, Dioſcorides, Palemon and Mela, were alſo eminent in different branches of literature.

On Nero's death being publicly known, many of his creatures were deſtroyed by the people; but ſeveral innocent perſons were alſo the victims of their fury. Order was, however, ſoon reſtored by the prætorians and ſenate, the latter having concurred in the election of Galba. Virginius, as he had declared, alſo acquieſced, and the new Emperor ſet out from Spain to take poſſeſſion of his new dignity. Before he arrived, Nymphidius, however, attempted the ſovereignty, but was almoſt inſtantly put to death by the guards, and his principal accomplices were afterwards executed by order of Galba.

The wicked miniſters of Nero ſhared the ſame fate, except Tigellinus, the worſt of them all, who eſcaped by dint of money. Indeed every

thing was ſold by Galba's favorites, in whom he entirely confided; and many unjuſtifiable cruelties and extortions took place.

Amongſt other acts of this reign, the gifts granted by Nero were ordered to be refunded, and likewiſe the penſions which had been paid, and which were now to ceaſe. This occaſioned great diſturbances in Greece and Italy. The prætorians alſo took offence at not getting the uſual donative; and ſtill more ſo, at Galba's endeavouring to reſtore the ancient diſcipline. Beſides theſe hoſtile appearances, the legions in Germany declared they would not obey him, at the ſame time leaving the nomination of a new Emperor to the ſenate. Thus ſurrounded with danger, Galba thought to avert it, by declaring Piſo-Licinianus his ſucceſſor. He was a man not only high in rank, but ſtill more diſtinguiſhed for his good qualities. But the guards being diſappointed in their expected donative on this occaſion alſo; became ripe for the deſtruction of both. Otho, who was highly diſpleaſed at the Emperor, for not having

choſen him to ſucceed to the throne, failed not to take advantage of their diſpoſitions. They therefore, at his inſtigation, diſpatched Galba and Piſo, and raiſed Otho to the purple.

The new Emperor was now obliged to ſubmit to whatever the prætorians propoſed. One of their regulations was, that they ſhould name their two commanders. Thus he in fact became their ſlave, and the ſenate, who dared not do otherwiſe, confirmed his election. But the German legions thought they had as good a right to make Emperors as the guards. They, therefore, nominated Vitellius, to whom all the weſtern provinces very ſoon ſubmitted. He then ſent an army towards Rome, which met and defeated Otho, who thereupon ſlew himſelf, declaring he did ſo, to prevent the further effuſion of Roman blood. During a ſhort reign of three months, he had highly ingratiated himſelf with both the ſoldiers and people; and, amongſt other good acts, he executed the infamous Tigellinus. The early part of his life was extremely vicious; but, as he was only

37 when he died, it is hard to ſay, how far he might have conquered the evil habits he had contracted.

Vitellius now haſtened to Italy, where his generals, Cæcina and Valens, were acting with great oppreſſion. On his viewing the field of battle, near Bebriacum, which had ſecured him the empire, one of his courtiers obſerving the ſtench from the ſlain, the Emperor replied, that a dead enemy ſmelt well, and a dead citizen better; which gave no very favorable prognoſtic of his diſpoſition. The Eaſtern provinces very ſoon joined in acknowledging Vitellius. His authority being thus fully eſtabliſhed, he gave free ſcope to all his paſſions; and ſuffering the army to do the ſame, the people were every where plundered and oppreſſed. To this he added an inſult of the groſſeſt kind, for he not only praiſed the actions of Nero, but ordered his deification, which accordingly took place.

Vitellius, to the moſt cruel and vicious nature, added the moſt enormous gluttony.

Every country was ranſacked for niceties to gratify his palate. Four or five meals a day was his uſual practice; and, in order to enjoy each, he took medicines to clear his ſtomach between them. In the courſe of four months, he is ſaid to have ſquandered ſeven millions ſterling, chiefly in this gratification. And beſides what he thus expended himſelf, he frequently deſired the principal men at Rome to entertain him, none of whom of courſe dared to refuſe him. You will obſerve, when I mention ſterling, I always mean Engliſh money.

Vitellius had diſbanded the prætorians, except four city corps, conſiſting of 1000 men each, to whom he added 16,000 new troops, making in all 20,000, for the protection of the city and his perſon. Theſe were commanded by Publius Sabinus and Julius Priſcus. But his chief confidants were Valens, Cæcina, and Aſiaticus, the laſt of whom was one of his pathics. They took care to fill their coffers at the public expence; though Vitellius endea-

voured to gratify the people of Rome by many magnificent exhibitions.

A ſtorm now gathered in the Eaſt, where the troops declared they would have Veſpaſian for their Emperor. His father had been a tax-gatherer in one of the Aſiatic provinces, and had acted with an integrity ſo unuſual to his office, that the people erected a pillar, with an inſcription,—to the honeſt publican.—The ſon was poſſeſſed of great abilities, but there were many exceptions to his private character; and he had riſen in the army by the meaneſt flattery to the princes who preceded him.

Vitellius had ſcarcely heard of this competitor, when an army, devoted to his intereſts, marched from Illyricum for Italy, under the command of Primus. He defeated the Emperor's forces at Cremona; the conſequence of which was, that Britain, Spain and Gaul immediately declared for Veſpaſian. Theſe examples were ſoon followed by moſt of Vitellius's Italian army, and Rome alone remained in his poſſeſſion.

Flavius Sabinus, the brother of Veſpaſian, was, at this period, governor of that city. Vitellius made terms with him, by which he conſented to reſign the Imperial dignity. He was, however, forced by the people to violate this treaty; and, in the commotion that followed, Sabinus was murdered. Primus therefore refuſed all negotiation; and Vitellius, not being able to make any effectual oppoſition, was taken and put to death.

Veſpaſian after this was every where acknowledged; and his entry into Rome was received with univerſal joy. This was confirmed by a general reform; and the ſenate having been reduced, under the bloody reigns that preceded, from 1000 to 200, he filled up the vacancies with the wiſeſt and beſt men he could find. He alſo compelled obedience to the laws, ſetting the example himſelf. The public money was expended in the encouragement of literature, uſeful improvements, and generous actions. But his mode of raiſing the funds for theſe objects was not ſo laudable, as he carried

taxation to almoſt every article: and what was worſe, the offices of ſtate were ſold, and offences were pardoned for money.

Titus having concluded the Jewiſh war, returned to Rome, where both he and his father, received the honor of a triumph. The temple of Janus was now ſhut, as univerſal tranquillity prevailed. A new temple to peace was at the ſame time erected, in which the ſpoils of the temple of Jeruſalem were depoſited. The command of the Prætorians was now given to Titus, who in fact became a partner in the Empire.

In this reign Julius Agricola was extremely ſucceſsful in Britain, making himſelf maſter of the iſland of Angleſea, which the natives had poſſeſſed themſelves of. The whole of the iſland except Scotland now acknowledged the Empire of Rome, and Agricola took great pains to reconcile the inhabitants to their conquerors. Veſpaſian was alſo ſucceſsful in ſuppreſſing ſome revolts, and attempts to

dethrone him; and on his death in 78, Titus was without a competitor.

Titus had in his youth been addicted to many vices; but he ſoon convinced the people, he was at leaſt equal to his father. All had free admittance to him, and it was one of his maxims, to let no man, if poſſible, depart unſatisfied. So frequent were his acts of generoſity, that he lamented the loſs of one particular day, in which he had no opportunity of exerting his benevolence. He aboliſhed the Law of Majeſty, at the ſame time cauſing all, who had been notorious informers, to be publicly whipt, and ſold for ſlaves. Having entered into the office of Pontifex Maximus, which was now always annexed to the Emperial dignity, he declared that no man ſhould be executed during his reign. Beſides theſe real acts of good government he ſtudied the gratification of the people. His father had begun, and he finiſhed a great amphitheatre, in which he gave vaſt entertainments. 500 wild beaſts were diſplayed in the

Arena, and a naval engagement was exhibited in the Naumachia; beſides a great ſhew of gladiators. Theſe and other ſports laſted for 100 days in ſucceſſion, and a high degree of popularity was the conſequence.

The firſt eruption of Mount Veſuvius happened in the firſt year of Titus's reign, by which many people loſt their lives; and ſeveral places were deſtroyed, and covered by the lava, amongſt which were the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Pliny the Elder, an able writer on natural hiſtory, and who at this time commanded the Roman fleet, loſt his life, by aſcending the mountain, to gratify his curioſity. This is recorded by his nephew Pliny the younger, whoſe letters have reached us, and wnoſe epiſtolary ſtile is peculiarly elegant. Titus did all in his power to alleviate this, and every other calamity that happened during the two years he was ſuffered to rule over the Roman Empire.

Some troubles of little conſequence broke out in Aſia, where an impoſtor had pretended

to be Nero. In Britain Agricola had extended his conqueſts, making the firths of Forth and Clyde the Roman boundary: and he ſtill further reconciled thoſe ſubjected iſlanders, by familiarizing them to the Roman cuſtom, and manners.

It was ſtrongly ſuſpected that Titus's death was occaſioned by poiſon, given him by his brother Domitian who had been allowed a ſhare in the Imperial power, and who now became ſole Emperor. To do away this, and other bad impreſſions, he commenced his career, by ſeveral acts of kindneſs and benevolence; and he alſo enacted ſome very wholeſome laws.

In this reign Agricola ſubjected the whole iſland of Britain, after meeting a gallant reſiſtance from the Caledonians, who in a very ſhort time after threw off the Roman yoke. Agricola would have paſſed into Ireland, where the arms of Rome had never penetrated, but the envy of Domitian recalled him. There were ſeveral petty wars at this period, in

different parts of the Empire, but the only one of conſequence, was that with the Dacians, a barbarous people from beyond the Danube. Under their king Decebalus they invaded the dominions of Domitian, who took the field againſt him. But inſtead of fighting, he purchaſed their retreat, by conſenting to pay an annual tribute; thus laying the foundation of future aggreſſion: and for this and other actions equally ſhameful, he from time to time beſtowed upon himſelf, the honors of ſeparate triumphs.

Beſides this meanneſs and folly the Emperor now let looſe his native diſpoſition. Some trivial commotions headed by inſignificant perſons, afforded him a pretence, for ſatisfying his love of blood and money: and as forfeitures and executions were the companions of each other, the innocent, if rich, were frequently mingled, with the guilty. He alſo conſulted Oracles and Aſtrologers, as to thoſe who were likely to riſe to power; and whoever they pointed out were ſure to periſh.

Men being in high repute for any thing, was ſufficient to cauſe death or baniſhment: and every book, perſon, or thing, that promoted virtue, was obnoxious to this tyrant.

The ſtile taken by Domitian, was Lord and God, alledging he had Minerva for his mother: and he ordered divine honors to be every where paid him throughout the Empire. In the 5th year of his reign he inſtituted ſports called Capitolini, which were to be commemorated at the ſame intervals as the Olympic Games. He alſo celebrated the Secular games, in the 100th year after they had been performed by Auguſtus. As he wiſhed to keep the people at large in humour, he entertained them with the moſt expenſive ſhews, amongſt which were combats of horſe and foot; exhibitions of gladiators where both men and women fought; and an immenſe naval engagement.

Agricola on being recalled from Britain, thought it prudent to live in retirement, but he did not long ſurvive, and Domitian was ſuſpected of having cut him off by poiſon.

Tacitus the celebrated hiſtorian, who was ſon-in-law to Agricola, mentions him as one of the beſt and greateſt men of that day; and his teſtimony is corroborated by the cotemporary authors.

Amidſt thoſe real acts of cruelty practiſed by Domitian, he on one occaſion contented himſelf by exciting the fear of death. Having invited a numerous company, they were ſhewn into a large apartment hung with black, in which coffins were placed with the name of each gueſt engraved on them. A number of naked perſons with their bodies blackened, each having a ſword and taper, then entered. Every one expected to be inſtantly butchered, but after theſe frightful figures had continued dancing for ſome time, they diſappeared; and the terrified gueſts were ſuffered to depart.

In the year 95 Domitian began what is called the ſecond general perſecution of the Chriſtians, ordering them to be every where treated as enemies of the ſtate. In it many perſons

of rank were executed, ſome of whom were nearly related to the Emperor.

All ancient hiſtory, and particularly that of Rome, is full of predictions, and prodigies, forerunning the death of perſons of high exaltation. Theſe accounts I have generally omitted, but there were two relative to Domitian, that I ſhall particulariſe. An aſtrologer called Aſcletarion having foretold the Emperor's approaching death, was ordered before him, where he perſiſted in his declaration. Domitian then aſked him if he knew, what was to be his own fate, to which he replied that he ſhould ſoon be devoured by dogs. To render this impoſſible, he was ordered to immediate execution, and his body to be burned. The firſt took place, but the latter was prevented by a ſudden ſtorm, and what he had ſaid of himſelf actually happened. Longinus Proculus another aſtrologer having predicted the day the tyrant was to die, he was thrown into priſon, with orders that he ſhould be put to death, the day following that which he had

fixed for Domitian: but he eſcaped, by the accompliſhment of what he had foretold, and was in high favor with the next Emperor.

Domitian, filled with apprehenſions, cauſed many whom he ſuſpected to be put to death, and at length he had the gallery where he uſually walked, ſet round with a poliſhed ſtone, looking glaſſes being not then invented, in order that none might approach unnoticed. He was however aſſaſſinated at the inſtigation of the Empreſs Domitia, ſhe having accidentally got poſſeſſion of a paper, where ſhe was marked for execution. Thus ended Domitian, after he had reigned about fifteen years. When this event was made known, the joy of the people was exceſſive; but he was regretted by the ſoldiery, whoſe pay he had enlarged, and whoſe vices he had indulged.

Under Veſpaſian and his ſons, the principal authors who flouriſhed were Juvenal, Martial, Flaccus, Statius, and a lady named Sulpicia, as Poets, the latter being called the Roman Sappho. Quintilian was celebrated for

his oratory, and writings on that ſubject. And Soranus a Phyſician wrote on Medicine. Joſephus the Hiſtorian and Pliny the elder and younger I have elſewhere mentioned. But the moſt remarkable man of this period, was Apollonius Tyaneus, a philoſopher of the Pythagorean ſyſtem. He was an open and violent enemy to Chriſtianity. He pretended to work miracles, and to have a knowledge of the thoughts of all men; and in many places was worſhipped as a deity. He conſequently every where encouraged the heathen eſtabliſhments; and it ſhould ſeem, that he had ſome ſupernatural powers, as the cotemporary Chriſtians accuſed him of being a ſorcerer, and a magician. He was born four years before Chriſt, and lived to the age of 100.

On the death of Domitian, Nerva, a Cretan by birth, but whoſe merit had rendered him conſpicuous, was raiſed to the Empire. He began with relieving, as far as in his power, thoſe who had ſuffered during the laſt reign. A redreſs of ſeveral grievances alſo took place,

and amongſt other wholeſome laws, the making of eunuchs, and inceſtuous marriages, were prohibited. Theſe good acts did not, however, prevent a conſpiracy being formed againſt him, headed by Calpurnius Craſſus: but he defeated it, and pardoned its leader, having ſworn at his elevation not to ſhed the blood of a ſenator.

The prætorians, headed by Caſperius Ælianus, contrary to the wiſhes of the Emperor, now ſhowed their regard to Domitian, by ſeizing all concerned in his aſſaſſination; and they put them to death even in the preſence of the aged Nerva. This conduct pointed out the neceſſity of fixing on a ſucceſſor, that would keep them in order; and, without regard to his own family, he appointed Ulpius Trajan, a Spaniard, who had eminently diſtinguiſhed himſelf. By his judicious conduct, Trajan, in a ſhort time, was able to puniſh Caſperius and his party; and, on the death of Nerva, who only reigned ſixteen months, he was every where acknowledged.

Trajan began his reign, by ſwearing to obſerve the laws; nobly and juſtly declaring, that they ought to be equally obligatory on the ſovereign and the ſubject. He retrenched every uſeleſs expence, at the ſame time puniſhing thoſe governors of provinces, who had abuſed their power. His bounty was extended to the poor and indigent; and, added to theſe ſhining civil qualities, he was the beſt and ableſt general of his day.

Thus qualified for war, he refuſed the tribute to Decebalus king of the Dacians. This led to a conteſt, in which the latter was totally defeated, and Trajan returned in triumph to Rome. Decebalus, however, made another effort, and it ended in Dacia being reduced to a Roman province. In the triumph which was celebrated on this acquiſition, the Emperor gratified the people with the moſt ſplendid ſhows for 123 ſucceſſive days; during which 10,000 gladiators were exhibited, and as many wild beaſts were deſtroyed.

Trajan was next engaged in a war with Parthia, and a great part of that empire ſubmitted to him: but he contented himſelf with giving it a king, who became tributary to Rome. Several inconſiderable nations beyond the Euphrates alſo acknowledged his ſuperiority. In Arabia he had likewiſe conſiderable ſucceſs, till he was repulſed at the city of Atra, ſoon after which he died on his return to Italy. This happened in the year 117, and his aſhes were depoſited under a magnificent pillar which he had erected at Rome. He made many other vaſt improvements, the chief of which was a ſquare that was called after him, and an immenſe road that extended from the Euxine ſea, to that which ſeparates Gaul from Britain. Under this Prince the empire was at its greateſt extent in point of territory; but it had long paſſed the ſummit of its real ſtrength and glory.

Towards the cloſe of Trajan's reign, the Jews of Egypt, Cyrenaica, Meſopotamia and Cyprus took up arms. For a ſhort time they committed the moſt dreadful exceſſes, but they

were ſoon ſubdued, and this weak attempt only encreaſed the afflictions of that unhappy and diſperſed race.

Trajan did not iſſue any edict againſt the Chriſtians, though he at firſt ſuffered them to be perſecuted. One marked inſtance of his humanity was his directing that the Britons ſhould aboliſh human ſacrifices, on pain of being chaſtiſed. But he either could not or would not prevent a man and woman of Gaul, and alſo the ſame of Greece, being buried alive in Rome. This was done as an expiation for a want of chaſtity amongſt the veſtal virgins, and was ſaid to be ordered by the Sibylline oracles.

The chief authors who flouriſhed in the time of Trajan, were Frontinus, whoſe principal work was on the ſtratagems uſed in war by the ableſt Greek and Roman commanders: Apollodorus who wrote on architecture, and who as an architect highly embelliſhed Rome: Dio-Chryſoſtom called Golden-mouth, celebrated as an orator and for his writings on philoſophy, and Tacitus, who is conſidered, and I believe

juſtly, one of the greateſt hiſtorians the world ever produced.

Trajan was ſucceeded by Adrian his relation, who had diſtinguiſhed himſelf in the military line, and was remarkable for his memory, being able to repeat the contents of a book after once reading it. This Prince conceived, that his predeceſſor had weakened the empire, by enlarging it; he therefore made the Euphrates in Aſia, and the Danube and Rhine in Europe, the boundaries, with the ſingle exception of Dacia, it being the only conqueſt of Trajan that he retained; and to prevent any danger from that quarter, he broke down a bridge which the laſt emperor had thrown over the Danube. Trajan had taken ſecurities for ſeveral ſums of money, due to the ſtate to the amount of ſeven millions ſterling. Adrian therefore made himſelf very popular, by burning theſe, and ſtill more ſo, by lowering the taxes both in Italy and the provinces.

Having chaſtiſed the Sarmatians and Roxolani, who had attacked Illyricum, and who

came from the borders of the Palus Mæotis; and having alſo got the ſenate to put to death ſome perſons whoſe deſigns he ſuſpected; Adrian reſolved to viſit every part of the empire. In Britain, he found the northern part of the iſland had entirely thrown off the Roman yoke: and in purſuance of his plan for fixing the boundaries, inſtead of ſeeking new acquiſitions, he erected a wall from the river Eden in Cumberland, to the Tyne in Northumberland. In Egypt, Adrian entertained himſelf by viſiting the Muſeum at Alexandria founded by Ptolemy Philadelphus, and to which the Emperor Claudius had added a new one, with a great eſtabliſhment. Whilſt in this country, Antinous, a beautiful youth, and a catamite of the Emperor's, was drowned in the Nile; as ſome ſay, becoming a voluntary victim to the ſuperſtition of Adrian, who ſuppoſed this ſacrifice would have procured him a long life. The Emperor, however, expreſſed the deepeſt ſorrow, and temples and ſacred rites were in different places erected and inſtituted to the favorite's honor.

At Athens, which Adrian greatly improved, he cauſed a temple and altar to be raiſed to himſelf. He now returned to Rome, where he indulged himſelf in all manner of lewdneſs, and gave looſe to his natural cruelty. Numbers were murdered by his orders, and his Empreſs Sabina was either poiſoned by him, or from his ill uſage put an end to herſelf; but he had her placed amongſt the gods and goddeſſes, and on his own death in 136, he alſo, as uſual, became the ſubject of deification.

Though the vices and crimes of this Prince were great, it is right to ſay, that he ornamented the empire with many magnificent buildings —that he enacted many wholeſome laws, and that he reduced the civil and military edicts into a code, which for a long time prevailed. At firſt he ſuffered the Chriſtians to be perſecuted, but latterly he became friendly to them, and it is ſaid, he would have erected a temple to Jeſus Chriſt, had not ſome oracles forbade it. The reign of Adrian who was himſelf a tolerable writer, was favorable to literature. Phle-

gon his freedman wrote ſeveral things worthy of notice. Epictetus, a ſtoic philoſopher, and who was originally a ſlave, left ſome works that are highly eſteemed. Florus, Suetonius, and Appian wrote hiſtory, and Plutarch gave a moſt able compariſon of the lives of the greateſt men of antiquity.

It was in this reign, as you have before ſeen, that the Jews ceaſed to be a nation. I ſhall therefore here briefly obſerve on the progreſs of Chriſtianity, during the firſt century and the beginning of the ſecond.

The Apoſtles, with thoſe particularly choſen to propagate the religion of Chriſt, had been ſo ſucceſsful in their miniſtry, that in the year 136, there was ſcarcely any part of the Roman empire where that doctrine was not promulgated, and where it had not numerous followers. This will appear the more extraordinary, when it is conſidered that they were every where perſecuted and oppreſſed, not only by the Jewiſh rulers and prieſts, who put numbers to death, but alſo by the Roman magiſtracy,. To ac-

count for this ſeverity to the Chriſtians is worthy our attention, becauſe it was contrary to the common practice of the Romans. That people in general had not only tolerated, but for the moſt part blended the religion of thoſe they conquered with their own; and even the Jews who were ſettled in different parts of the empire, were permitted the exerciſe of the Moſaic inſtitutions.

The firſt offence given by the Chriſtians, was their open attack on idolatry; and the ſimplicity of primitive Chriſtianity was alſo extremely odious to the multitude. Nay, they even deemed the Chriſtians atheiſts, for want of that outward pomp and ſhow, which aways attended the Pagan rites; and though the Jews had been much diſliked for adhering to the worſhip of only one God, yet as their ceremonies were great and magnificent, they were now infinitely preferred to the followers of Jeſus. Thus unpopular, it was eaſy for thoſe who found themſelves injured in their property by the ſucceſs of the Chriſtian doctrine, to raiſe up ſtorms againſt

it. The heathen prieſts, as it gained ground, ſaw many of their followers deſerting them; and taking the alarm, they laid every public calamity to the vengeance of the Gods, for ſuffering theſe perverters of the ancient religion. The merchants and artiſts, who ſupplied the heathen temples with the various articles required for ornament, for offerings, and for ſacrifices, joined in the outcry. From theſe different cauſes, the Roman magiſtrates were brought to interfere: and at length, under Nero and Domitian, the moſt dreadful perſecutions took place.

Inſtead of extirpating the profeſſors of Chriſtianity, theſe violent meaſures had the contrary effect. Moſt of the Apoſtles, and the greater part of thoſe who peculiarly exerted themſelves in ſpreading the doctrines of Chriſt, were put to deaths of torture; but in the midſt of their torments they gloried in the cauſe for which they died. When evidence ſo inconteſtable was given of things, which they declared to have known and ſeen, and which

had ſo lately happened in the world—when the purity, ſimplicity, and morality of their lives and tenets, were added to theſe examples—when no human reaſon could be aſſigned for men during their lives abandoning every profitable and diſſipated purſuit, and dying rather than deny thoſe things they taught—I ſay when all theſe things were conſidered, multitudes liſtened to the belief of another life, in which ſuch men ſhould meet their reward. Thus the perſecuting ſpirit of the idolatrous prieſthood increaſed that religion which it meant to deſtroy; and afforded the ſtrongeſt teſtimony of it's divine origin.

Let us now examine the ſimple forms which firſt attended the pure and ſpiritual worſhip of genuine Chriſtianity. Every church had its own peculiar biſhop, but none of them claimed any ſuperiority over another. Each had preſbyters and deacons to aſſiſt him. The biſhops and preſbyters were elected by the congregations, but the deacons, who were ſeven in number, were appointed by the biſhop laying

his hands on them. The number of the preſbyters was in the diſcretion of the flock. The ceremonies were few, and no alteration could be made in thoſe of any congregation, without the joint conſent of it's biſhop, the deacons, and the people.

From the very commencement of Chriſtianity, the Church was however diſturbed by various hereſies: and many of the philoſophers ſought to blend their doctrines with thoſe of Chriſt. But the great body of the Chriſtians as yet endeavoured to live up to the precepts of their Maſter. They made kindneſs to one another the great offspring of their faith, and at the ſacrament of the Lord's Supper thoſe of the ſame church actually ſupped together, contributing at the ſame time to the wants of ſuch of their aſſociation as required it. No vain ceremony had yet crept in, nor was a creed of any kind eſtabliſhed; a belief in the Scriptures at large, and a life conformable thereto, being all that was required. Many faſted out of choice, but there was but one day, the anni-

verſary of the crucifixion, in which it was enjoined: and ſo well did they practiſe the duties of patience, reſignation, and forgiveneſs of injuries, that I do not read of one ſingle inſtance prior to the year 136, in which the Chriſtians even attempted to repel force by force. Tacitus, who was a heathen, hath indeed thought proper to abuſe them in general terms. He however gives no fact to warrant his aſſertions; nor does any other author of credit. It is probable he conſidered them merely as Jews, both coming from Judea; and this is the more likely, as what he ſays will apply tolerably well to the Jews of that period. On the ſide of Chriſtianity, there are many authors who ſhew Tacitus miſtaken, and whoſe integrity cannot be impeached. From them we learn the virtues and heroic conduct of multitudes, whoſe actions are particularly related: and I will venture to aſſert, that the annals of the heathen world do not afford ſo many inſtances of true courage and magnanimity as were diſplayed in the firſt, and be-

ginning of the ſecond century of the Chriſtian æra. The writers moſt diſtinguiſhed on the ſubject of the Chriſtian religion, and not mentioned in the New Teſtament, were Clemens (Romanus) the cotemporary of St. Paul, Ignatius, Papias, and Quadratus. The three laſt were alſo biſhops, and the immediate diſciples of St. John. Ignatius ſuffered martyrdom, being torn to pieces by lions, by the order of the Emperor Trajan. Ebion, a profeſſor of Chriſtianity during this period, was the founder of a ſect called Ebionites: and prior to it, even in the days of the Apoſtles themſelves, a body of men who called themſelves Nicolaitans, and whoſe tenets were abominable, diſgraced the name of Chriſtianity.

LETTER

LETTER FOURTH.

ADRIAN had firſt choſen a very worthleſs man named Commodus Verus for his ſucceſſor. Verus however died before Adrian, who then fixed on Titus Antoninus, at the ſame time expreſsly ſtipulating that he ſhould adopt M. Annius Verus, afterwards called M. Aurelius and L. Verus: the latter was ſon to his late favorite Commodus.

Before the death of Adrian, Antoninus had diſplayed many virtues, and numbers owed their ſafety to his humanity. Having now attained the ſupreme power, he fully juſtified every expectation, and is allowed to have been one of the beſt Princes that hiſtory records. To the talents neceſſary for government, he alſo added thoſe private virtues that adorn the man; and the Roman Empire was as happy under his adminiſtration, as its own internal vices would admit of. He promoted men of

merit—was an encourager of learning—repaired the public edifices—leſſened the taxes; and in ſhort exerted every power to beſtow happineſs. His ſubjects, filled with love and gratitude, in return gave him the title of Pious; and for one hundred years afterwards every Emperor took the addition of Antoninus.

This reign laſted twenty-three years, during which there was very little diſſenſion, either foreign or domeſtic. In Britain however the Roman boundary was again extended to the firths of Forth and Clyde, and a wall was built from the one to the other. When Antoninus firſt mounted the throne, the Chriſtians were perſecuted under the then exiſting laws, but Juſtin, called the Martyr, having wrote an apology for their conduct, addreſſed to the Emperor, every perſon arraigned on account of Chriſtianity was ordered to be diſcharged: and from thenceforth all accuſations as to religion were prohibited, under a very heavy penalty.

Marcus Aurelius, the couſin german and adopted ſon of Antoninus, whoſe daughter he had alſo married, had in fact latterly ſhared the ſupreme power; and now ſucceeded to the Empire. Antoninus had neglected L. Verus on account of his vices, but under the ſtipulations made by Adrian, Aurelius admitted him to be his colleague, at the ſame time giving him a daughter in marriage. In ſtate affairs L. Verus was chiefly governed by the influence of his father in law: but in private life he indulged in the vileſt debaucheries, and his extravagance knew no bounds. One inſtance of the latter is ſo ſingular, that I ſhall mention it. He had a favorite horſe called Celer, whom he clothed with purple, fed with almonds and raiſins, and lodged in his palace, and when the animal died, he cauſed a monument, and a ſtatue of gold, to be erected to his memory.

A war breaking out with the Parthians, Verus was ſent againſt them. He ſtopt at Antioch, with ſome of his vicious companions, leaving the duties of the field to his

Lieutenants: but as they proved ſucceſsful, Verus on his return to Rome enjoyed a triumph jointly with Aurelius, after which they marched againſt the Barbarians, who were becoming formidable on the boundaries of Gaul and Illyricum. Verus dying during this expedition, which was unſucceſsful, Aurelius was better enabled to ſtudy the happineſs of his people. The neceſſities of the ſtate requiring a large ſum of money, rather than add to the taxes, he diſpoſed of the plate, ſtatues, pictures, and other ornaments belonging to the palace: and the product being inſufficient, he encreaſed it, by the ſale of his own, and the Empreſs's ornaments.

Aurelius being thus ſupplied, ſet out again, againſt the Barbarians, and his arms were attended with great ſucceſs: but purſuing it too far, he got into a ſituation, where his men were near expiring from thriſt, and were at the ſame time attacked by the enemy. At this critical moment, a dreadful thunder ſtorm aroſe, which deſtroyed ſome of the Barbari-

ans, and terrified the reſt, whilſt it only rained on the Romans. Their thirſt was by this means quenched, and a deciſive victory took place, which was followed by a treaty highly advantageous to the Empire.

All the authors who relate this event ſpeak of it as a miraculous interpoſition. The Heathens attributed it either to the power of magicians, or a prayer made by Aurelius to Jupiter. The Chriſtians aſcribed it to a divine interference in favour of a legion of that religion, which compoſed a part of the army. One thing is however certain; an edict was immediately iſſued, ordering a ſevere puniſhment to all who ſhould accuſe the Chriſtians on account of their faith.

A falſe report of Aurelius's death having reached the Eaſt, where Avidius Caſſius commanded he aſſumed the purple. On the Emperor's approach, Avidius was put to death by his own troops, and Aurelius treated thoſe, who had been involved in his guilt, with the greateſt clemency. The Empreſs Fauſtina

dying about this period, ſhe was deified, Aurelius at the ſame time cauſing an altar to be raiſed in the temple erected to her memory, on which every new married couple were ordered to ſacrifice. This was a weakneſs, that is not to be juſtified, becauſe he was no ſtranger to her infamous character, which was that of being one of the moſt debauched women of her time.

Aurelius had aſſociated with him his ſon Commodus, and peace being every where reſtored, they jointly triumphed. They at the ſame time gratified the people and ſoldiery by diſtributing money amongſt them, and by giving ſome ſplendid entertainments. In the latter Aurelius evinced the humanity of his diſpoſition by ordering the gladiators to fight with blunt ſwords, which prevented the blood uſually ſhed on ſuch occaſions.

In the year 178 Germany was again invaded by the Barbarians, the principal tribe of whom was the Marcomanni. Aurelius and his ſon immediately went againſt them, and ob-

tained a great victory, which the former did not long ſurvive This Emperor was peculiarly diſtinguiſhed for his knowledge of the different ſyſtems of Philoſophy, from whence he was called the Philoſopher. His own heart from all accounts was truly virtuous; but from an eaſy temper he ſuffered thoſe under him, and particularly the governors of provinces, to miſbehave with impunity. His people however knew how to diſtinguiſh, between their vices, and the upright intentions of Aurelius: and beſides the uſual honor of deification, they had ſtatues of him in their houſes, as a tutelary deity.

Aurelius was himſelf a good writer, and at the ſame time a man of eloquence. He of courſe encouraged literature, and there were ſome good proſe compoſitions during his reign.

Commodus, who is generally ſuppoſed to have been the ſon of a gladiator with whom Fauſtina was intimate, began his reign by purchaſing peace from the Barbarians. He then

diſmiſſed all in whom Aurelius had particularly confided. Many ſenators were put to death, without any juſt cauſe, and a conſpiracy, which ſuch meaſures occaſioned, was detected and puniſhed with the utmoſt ſeverity. Some diſtant inſurrections of no importance afterwards took place and were ſuppreſſed; and Commodus then indulged his cruel diſpoſition indiſcriminately. Perennis his prime miniſter, with all his family, were deſtroyed by his orders: and a mob demanding the head of Cleander his favourite, he had it thrown to them without heſitation.

During this reign, which laſted 13 years, every thing was ſold throughout the Empire. If a man even wanted to murder another, he could purchaſe the right of doing ſo with impunity. The ſums thus acquired Commodus applied to his various infamous gratifications. He frequently appeared as an actor in ſhews which he exhibited, and on one occaſion danced naked before the public. His luſts were infamous beyond example. He debauched

his own ſiſters—kept 300 concubines—and as many catamites.

Commodus, who poſſeſſed uncommon ſtrength, firſt exerted it on animals, killing as it is ſaid one hundred lions one after another by a ſingle blow at each; and likewiſe driving a ſpear through an elephant. Afterwards he had men who accidentally came acroſs him, dreſſed in the ſkins of wild beaſts, and he then knocked their brains out with his club. On one occaſion he proved his ſtrength, by dividing the body of a corpulent man, by a ſingle cut of his ſword. At an exhibition of wild beaſts, he has been known to order ſeveral of the ſpectators to be thrown to them, who were accordingly devoured. He frequently amuſed himſelf by putting out the eyes, and cutting off the feet, ears and noſes of people, againſt whom there was not even an accuſation. At length this abominable monſter was diſpatched by a conſpiracy in the palace, headed by Marcia a favorite concubine; but

who had latterly ſome reaſon, to be alarmed for herſelf.

Pertinax, a man of mean origin, but great merit, was now raiſed to the Empire. He began with reforming abuſes, the greateſt of which, were the exceſſive power and vices of the Prætorians. But this attempt coſt him his life in about three months after his elevation: and theſe infamous troops then put up the Empire to public auction.

Didius Julianus, one of the wealthieſt among the Romans, was the beſt bidder. They therefore inveſted him with the purple, at the ſame time obliging him to take the additional name of Commodus. When the forces in the diſtant provinces heard of this extraordinary tranſaction, they refuſed to acknowledge his authority. Thoſe in Syria proclaimed Peſcennius Niger: and in Illyricum the ſoldiers named Septimius Severus. This latter ſtrengthened his party conſiderably, by creating Clodius Albinus the commander in Britain, his Cæſar; that name having been for ſome time given to

thoſe who were to ſucceed the reigning Emperors.

On Severus's approach to Rome, the Prætorians who were as daſtardly, as they were vicious abandoned Julian; after which the ſenate put him to death, at the ſame time acknowledging Severus. The new Emperor began his reign by executing ſuch of the guards, as had been concerned in the death of Pertinax. The reſt he diſbanded, and iſſued an edict prohibiting them from ever coming within 100 miles of Rome. Having firſt rewarded his forces, he ſelected the flower of them for a new body of guards, which conſiſted of four times the number of the former; at the ſame time ordering that every vacancy in future ſhould be in like manner filled up. The old Prætorians had been entirely Italians, and it was from their conſtant reſidence in, or near the capital, that they had become ſo effeminate and depraved.

Severus having ſettled matters at home, went in purſuit of Niger his competitor, who

ſoon loſt his life, and the Emperor whoſe cruelty was extreme, exterminated his family and principal followers. He then attempted to get rid of Albinus by aſſaſſination, who on diſcovering it was obliged in his own defence to become a competitor for the Empire. He was however very ſoon defeated and ſlain; after which his relations and friends were put to death, and their property confiſcated. Severus being now in full poſſeſſion of the Empire, had a number of the citizens of Rome executed, amongſt whom were the conſpirators againſt Commodus, and that monſter was then deified by his orders.

The Parthians having commenced hoſtilities, Severus with his two ſons Caracalla and Geta went againſt them. Succeſs again attended him, and in addition to his uſual cruelty, he now commenced a perſecution of the Chriſtians. Severus however made ſome wholſome laws under the direction of Papinian a celebrated Civilian, and who was alſo captain of

the new guards, in right of which office he likewiſe preſided in all cauſes of conſequence.

A revolt in Britain induced Severus to viſit that iſland, being accompanied by his ſons, whom he had before aſſociated in the Empire. The revolt was ſoon put down, and he had alſo ſome ſucceſs againſt the Caledonians, but he narrowly eſcaped being aſſaſſinated by Caracalla. Though this was forgiven, that abominable wretch made a party in the forces, and was about to rebel, when Severus who had received information of it, repaired to the army, and had all the principal perſons concerned in it, inſtantly ſeiſed and executed. He however again pardoned Caracalla and ſoon after expired. Juſt before his death he adviſed his ſons to keep the affections of the ſoldiery, without any regard to their other ſubjects: thus entailing miſery on the Empire to the utmoſt of his power. Galen the celebrated Phyſician flouriſhed at this period, and was very high in favor with Severus.

Caracalla, not being able to prevail on the army to exclude Geta, made ſeveral unſucceſsful attempts to aſſaſſinate him. The conſequence was, that they had no intercourſe with each other. This being known to their mother Julia, ſhe endeavoured on their return to Rome to bring about a reconciliation. Geta ſincerely, and Caracalla apparently, complied with her wiſhes; and her chamber was appointed for the interview. But there the horrid Caracalla perpetrated his long meditated purpoſe, and Julia was ſlightly wounded in a vain attempt to ſave Geta. The aſſaſſin then gave out that what he had done was in ſelf-defence, at the ſame time ſecuring the ſoldiers by a large donative. Thoſe who had been in any way attached to his unfortunate brother were put to death without regard to ſex or age; and many more fell to his caprice, his avarice and his reſentment. Amongſt the latter, was Papinian the Civilian. The Emperor had applied to him, to compoſe a ſpeech, which ſhould excuſe the murder of his brother to the

ſenate. Inſtead of complying, Papinian nobly replied it was eaſier to commit a fratricide than to juſtify it; and his execution was the conſequence.

The Barbarians becoming troubleſome in different quarters, Caracalla at firſt took the field; but he ſoon preferred an ignominious peace to the hazards of war. As he wiſhed to conceal that he had purchaſed it, he allowed none to be preſent when the treaty was concluded, but the deputies from the enemy and his own interpreters. As ſoon as the buſineſs was ended and the former had departed, he had the latter deſtroyed, in the hopes that the tranſaction would be buried in oblivion, but in this he was diſappointed.

Being called into Thrace, and then into Aſia, by ſome wars that broke out in thoſe quarters, he aſſumed the characters of the greateſt men, that each country through which he paſſed had produced; amongſt which were thoſe of Achilles and Alexander. Every where he practiſed his uſual cruelty, treachery and extortion.

At Alexandria, which had the misfortune to receive a viſit from him, he peculiarly let looſe his ſavage diſpoſition, ſome Lampoons, on the death of Geta, being ſuppoſed to have originated there. The maſſacre commenced at night, and as the directions to the ſoldiery were to ſpare neither age nor ſex, the ſlaughter was dreadful.

Caracalla had given orders to the commandant at Rome, to find out by all poſſible means, if any perſon was aiming at the Empire, and a ſooth-ſayer having declared that Macrinus, who was captain of the Emperor's guards, and his ſon Diadumenus, would poſſeſs the purple, the commandant thought it his duty to tranſmit this information to Caracalla, but a friend of Macrinus, learning he had done ſo, found means to communicate it to the latter before the arrival of the Emperor's diſpatches. Macrinus, well knowing that his own life hung on the moment, inſtantly diſpatched Caracalla; and the troops being ignorant by whoſe hand he fell, readily acknowledged the captain of the Prætorians as

his ſucceſſor. The new Emperor then raiſed Diadumenus to the rank of Cæſar, on each occaſion gratifying the army with a large donation.

Macrinus thought proper to purchaſe peace from the Parthians, that he might have leiſure to rectify many abuſes. One of the greateſt, was the total want of all regular diſcipline in the military. But the licentious ſoldiery ill brooked any attempt to reform them; and having now become acquainted with the cauſe of their favorite Caracalla's death, they were ripe for his deſtruction.

Caracalla left behind him an aunt named Mæſa. She was poſſeſſed of great wealth, and had procured for her grandſon Heliogabalus the office of High-Prieſt to the temple of Eleagabalus or the ſun, at Emeſa. Near that city there happened to be a camp, which, by the intrigues of Mæſa, was very ſoon induced to proclaim Heliogabalus their Emperor. This example was followed by another army that was ſtationed not far diſtant; and after a

feeble and unſucceſsful reſiſtance, Macrinus was taken and put to death, as was alſo his ſon and their particular friends.

The young emperor, then only 14 years old, was immediately every where acknowledged. On his arrival at Rome, he began with a very novel ſtep, for he enrolled his mother's name in the Senate, with full liberty for her to ſpeak and vote in that aſſembly: and Mœſa alſo inſtituted and preſided in a ſenate of women, which was to enact laws and regulations for their own ſex. The emperor now erected a magnificent temple to the ſun, alledging that all other gods were ſervants to him; and he had it in contemplation to remove the perpetual fire of Veſta, the ſtatue of Cybele, the bucklers of Mars, and the ſacred Palladium to his temple, and at the ſame time to aboliſh every other worſhip. Beſides the temple at Rome, he had another in the country for the ſummer reſidence of Eleagabalus, and that nothing might be wanting for his accommodation, he ordered the image of the goddeſs Cæleſtis to be brought

from Carthage, and gave her in marriage to his favorite deity, celebrating the nuptials with the utmoſt magnificence. To theſe abſurdities he added the moſt dreadful barbarity, for he ſacrificed children to him; and none but thoſe of the moſt illuſtrious deſcent were offered on his altars.

In luſt and expence, this horrid Prince was exceeded by few of his predeceſſors. He reigned only four years, during which he had ſix wives, one of whom he murdered, and the others he divorced. He had alſo a number of other women and Catamites, and was twice publicly married to two of the latter. His cloaths, which were of the moſt expenſive kind, he never wore more than once; and the gold plate with which he was conſtantly ſerved, was every day given to thoſe around him. The places where ſea-fights were ſometimes exhibited, he filled with wine, and his own ponds with roſe water. He pampered his palate with all the moſt expenſive things that could be thought of, and even the wild beaſts belonging to him were

fed with partridges and pheaſants. Beſides all theſe extravagancies, he ſquandered immenſe ſums among his guards and the people of Rome.

Mæſa, who had in vain oppoſed him and his favorites, ſaw that this would end in his deſtruction; ſhe therefore prevailed on him to raiſe Alexianus, or Alexander, another grandſon of hers, to the rank of Cæſar. Finding he could not make his couſin, who was only 13 years old, partake of his vices, he reſolved to get rid of him; but the guards having notice of his intentions, prevented it by putting Heliogabalus himſelf to death; and Mæſa alſo periſhed on this occaſion.

Alexander, who took the addition of Severus, was thus raiſed to the empire in 222; and being chiefly directed by his mother Julia Mammæa, who had given him a very good education, his conduct gave univerſal ſatisfaction. He ſet about reforming abuſes, and was particularly kind to the Chriſtians. His mother is indeed ſuppoſed to have been ſecretly of that perſuaſion; and it is ſaid her ſon would have erected a temple to Chriſt, had not his counſellors diſ-

ſuaded him, by alledging that every other place of worſhip would then be abandoned.

Vetronius Turinus, a favorite with Alexander, being detected in having extorted large ſums of money from different perſons, under the falſe pretence of his having procured for them places to which they had been appointed, was executed by the Emperor's orders. The mode of his death was correſpondent to his crime. He was ſuſpended from a gibbet under which green wood was placed, and ſet on fire; and whilſt he was expiring from the ſuffocation it occaſioned, a crier proclaimed, that he who had ſold ſmoke, died by ſmoke.

The Prætorian guards had become, as formerly, uncontroulable; and when Domitius Ulpian their captain and an eminent Civilian, diſpleaſed them by ſome orders, they put him to death even in the preſence of Alexander. He had however afterwards the ſatisfaction of being able to puniſh the murderers of Ulpian.

Some revolts and tumults of no great conſequence having been ſuppreſſed in different

quarters, Alexander was at length called into very active ſcenes in the field. Artaxerxes, who as you have elſewhere ſeen, reinſtated the Perſian, by the ruin of the Parthian empire, meditated a conqueſt of all that had formerly belonged to Cyrus; and having a very large army that had been uſed to ſervice, the Roman Emperor wiſely conſidered him as a formidable foe. He therefore began with reſtoring diſcipline to the Roman forces. This he effected by the moſt undaunted courage, and with no little riſque to his life; but he enforced obedience, and puniſhed every offender, without regard to perſonal danger; and as he was equally attentive to military merit, his army in a ſhort time loved him, for what at firſt had met with almoſt general diſapprobation. He avowed that the only maxim that governed him was that of doing as he would be done by; and his actions proved the ſincerity of his expreſſions. When prepared by theſe exertions, he led his forces to victory; and having got rid of the Perſian war, he returned in triumph to Rome.

Alexander was obliged to take the field again, to repel the barbarians who had returned to the attack of the Northern parts of the Empire in Europe. During his march it is recorded that a Druideſs predicted his approaching cataſtrophe, and ſoon after both Alexander and his mother, who had accompanied him, were put to death. Thoſe who committed the atrocious deed were immediately deſtroyed by the enraged army. But Maximinus, who was ſecretly at the bottom of it, was raiſed to the Empire. Thus periſhed in the 27th year of his age, one of the beſt and greateſt of the Roman Emperors.

On its being rumoured, that Maximinus was concerned in the murder of Alexander, a part of the army revolted from him. It was however ſoon ſubdued, and all who were ſuppoſed to be his enemies, together with thoſe who particularly knew the meanneſs of his birth, he being a Goth of very low origin, were put to death. Maximinus then attacked the barbarians with ſucceſs: and he endeavoured to

ſecure the affections of his ſoldiers by every gratification in his power to beſtow. At Rome however, and in other parts of the Empire, he was juſtly odious: and on the troops in Africa electing Gordianus Emperor, it was confirmed by the Senate. That body alſo proclaimed Maximinus a public enemy, and executed all they could get at, who had declared in his favor: but ſome friends of Maximinus, who were in Africa, on the other hand, cut off Gordianus and his ſon.

As ſoon as the Senate were informed of what had happened in Africa, they raiſed two noble Romans, Maximus and Balbinus, to the purple: and the Gordians having been great favorites with the people, a youth of that family, then only twelve years old, was made Cæſar. Maximus now ſet out at the head of an army to meet Maximinus, who had already entered Italy. But the forces of the latter prevented a conteſt by diſpatching their leader together with his ſon, at the ſame time acknowledging the authority of the two Emperors.

Maximinus was a very ſingular man, being eight feet high, and well proportioned; and of uncommon ſtrength and ſwiftneſs. His appetite was more than in proportion to his ſize, being able to eat from forty to ſixty pounds weight of food at a meal, and he is ſaid to have frequently drunk ſix gallons of wine without being intoxicated. Courage was the only good quality he poſſeſſed, and to that alone he owed his being raiſed to a very high command, prior to his obtaining the purple.

During the ſhort abſence of Maximus, Rome was filled with tumult and blood. His return produced domeſtic tranquillity, and both he and his colleague exerted themſelves for the public welfare. But this was far from being pleaſing to the Prætorians, and both the Emperors were diſpatched by them when on the eve of going againſt the enemies of the Empire.

Gordian in his right as Cæſar now became ſole Emperor. He was at firſt led aſtray by thoſe he confided in; but having the good

fortune to marry the daughter of Miſitheus, a man both able and willing to adviſe him, he immediately rectified his errors. In the year 242 the Emperor, though only nineteen years of age, took the field againſt Sapor, king of Perſia, who had penetrated into Syria. In this war he proved ſucceſsful, but Julius Philippus, who had become Captain of the Prætorians on the death of Miſitheus, ſoon after cut off Gordian, and aſſumed the purple. It was not long however before Philip and his ſon were conquered and ſlain by Decius, who commanded the forces in Illyricum.

Decius, who was every where acknowledged Emperor, commenced a perſecution againſt the Chriſtians. He however held the ſceptre only two years, loſing his life in an expedition againſt the barbarians, who had paſſed the Rhine. Gallus who next reigned, purchaſed peace of them, and continued the Chriſtian perſecution. At the end of eighteen months, during which he had indulged in the groſſeſt pleaſures, he was diſpatched by his own forces,

on the approach of Æmilianus, who had been proclaimed in Mæſia: and who ſoon after met a ſimilar fate, on an army commanded by Valerian, marching againſt him. This happened in the year 253, and Valerian having eſtabliſhed his authority, Gallienus, his ſon, was declared Cæſar.

The new Emperor, juſtly fearful of the Prætorians, now incorporated 3500 men, under a new officer called Comes Domeſticorum, for the immediate protection of his perſon. Theſe of courſe took rank of the former, who were thenceforth to act wherever they were ordered. The Empire being at this period threatened from every quarter, Gallienus was ſent againſt the barbarians who were invading Europe, having Aurelian, Poſthumius, and Probus, three very able generals, to aſſiſt him. Valerian himſelf marched againſt a competitor in the Eaſt, who was ſupported by the Perſians. This was Cyriades, an infamous Roman youth, and in the war that followed the Emperor became the priſoner of Sapor, the Perſian mon-

arch. During his captivity, which laſted ſome years, he was treated with the moſt ſtudied ignominy, his infamous conqueror uſing him as a footſtool to mount his horſe, and when the unfortunate prince was carried off by diſeaſe, Sapor had his ſkin ſtuffed and preſerved as a monument of the ſucceſs which his arms had obtained againſt the Romans. One of the moſt violent perſecutions of the Chriſtians had taken place by order of Valerian, ſo that his ill ſucceſs was not regretted by them; and it is ſaid his ſon Gallienus expreſſed a ſavage joy at receiving the news, as it raiſed him to the Empire. He however ſoon found that his authority was rather nominal than real, as the troops in every qnarter proceeded to elect Emperors for themſelves.

From the year 256, when Gallienus became Emperor, to the year 264, when he loſt his life at the ſiege of Milan, upwards of twenty perſons in different parts had aſſumed the purple. Almoſt every one of theſe had been cut off in the wars civil and foreign that

enſued: and during the ſame period plagues, famine, and peſtilence alſo abounding, the moſt extreme miſery pervaded this vaſt Empire.

The only perſon that Gallienus had aſſociated with him in the government was Odenatus, a man of royal blood, and a native of Palmyra. After the captivity of Valerian, he had been the chief ſupport of the Romans againſt the Perſians, and when he was made joint Emperor, Zenobia his wife was at the ſame time declared Auguſta, and their three ſons Cæſars. Odenatus and his ſon Herod were however ſoon after ſlain in the wars that followed.

Gallienus had been able during all theſe diſtractions to keep poſſeſſion of Rome; and on his return to it, from an expedition in which he had no ſucceſs, he thought proper to enter it in triumph. Real priſoners being wanting, he exhibited a number of perſons to repreſent thoſe he might have been ſuppoſed to have taken. The ſpectators could not refrain from laughing at this mockery, but for the involun-

tary offence many were burned by his orders: and I ſhall only add that his cruelties and debaucheries kept pace with each other.

On Gallienus's fate being known at Rome, the Senate took the lead. They began by putting to death the miniſters, favorites, friends, and relations of this Emperor; at the ſame time acknowledging Claudius, the ſecond of that name, as his ſucceſſor. Having táken care that his predeceſſor ſhould be deified according to cuſtom, Claudius defeated and ſlew Aureolus, who had commanded the army at Milan againſt Gallienus; and then marching to oppoſe the Goths and other barbarous nations who had invaded the Empire, he proved completely victorious. During this expedition it is ſaid 300,000 of the enemy were killed or made priſoners: and from this ſucceſs he took the additional name of Gothicus.

On this Emperor's death, which was a natural one, his brother Quintillus obtained the purple for a few days, when he was cut off, and Aurelian elected in his ſtead. The only

one of thoſe who had aſſumed the Imperial dignity in Europe, during the reign of Gallienus, now living, was Tetricus. Aurelian, however, left him for the preſent in poſſeſſion of Spain, Gaul and Britain; and having made peace with the Goths, and chaſtiſed the Vandals and ſome other barbarians, he proceeded to the Eaſt; having firſt executed a number of perſons at Rome, on account of ſome diſturbances, which they had occaſioned.

Zenobia, after the death of her huſband, aſſumed his authority, and had exerciſed it for upwards of five years; her two ſons, who were minors, taking the title of Emperors. Gallienus had denied her right to do ſo; but ſhe was able to withſtand the army he ſent againſt her. Aurelian, therefore, proceeded in perſon to dethrone her; and, proving ſucceſsful, ſhe was beſieged in Palmyra, her capital. Finding it could not hold out, Zenobia attempted to eſcape by night, with a few followers; but, inſtead of accompliſhing it, ſhe fell into the

hands of the Romans, and the city ſoon after ſurrendered.

Zenobia now forfeited all claim to true greatneſs, by throwing the blame of her reſiſtance on Longinus, her faithful miniſter. His execution was the conſequence; which he met with real heroiſm; exclaiming, that this world was a priſon, and that he was happieſt, who ſooneſt regained his liberty. Beſides his courage, and great talents for public affairs, he was the moſt learned man of his time; and tho' moſt of his works are loſt, a part of his treatiſe on the true Sublime is extant, and is allowed to be the moſt eminent piece of juſt criticiſm that has ever appeared in the world. Moſt of the other chief adherents of this Empreſs were alſo executed; but ſhe and her family were treated with kindneſs and generoſity.

Aurelian having ſecured the tranquillity of the Eaſt, and put Firmus to death, who had aſſumed the purple in Egypt, bent his courſe againſt Tetricus. The latter, however, almoſt

immediately ſubmitted, and was treated with the greateſt liberality. Aurelian having thus, in fact, reſtored the Empire, entered Rome in triumph; and he now ingratiated himſelf with the people, by his ſhews and entertainments; and ſtill more ſo, by adding a certain proportion of pork, to the bread and oil which were uſually diſtributed amongſt the citizens.

The Perſians having recommenced hoſtilities, Aurelian again took the field, but was murdered in Thrace. This was owing to Mneſtheus, his ſecretary, who was fearful of puniſhment for ſome offence he had committed, and who had therefore falſely informed the chief officers, that the Emperor was about to cut them off. Mneſtheus, however, being detected, was executed; and the enraged army cut to pieces all who had an immediate hand in the aſſaſſination. They alſo came to a reſolution, that none of their officers ſhould ſucceed Aurelian, and they applied to the ſenate to appoint an Emperor. Conſcious of its inſignificance, that body at firſt refuſed; but the military perſiſting, they

at length named Tacitus, the prince of their aſſembly.

Tacitus, being 75 years old, accepted the purple with reluctance. He however reſolved to do his duty, and immediately joined the army. But, in a very few months, he died either a violent or natural death; and his ſucceſſor, Florianus, was cut off in a few days by his own troops, at the approach of Probus, who had been declared Emperor by the forces in Syria and Egypt. Probus then took the command of both armies, and having chaſtiſed different enemies of the Empire, he entered Rome in triumph. Freſh commotions ſoon followed; four others aſſuming the purple in different places; but they all in a ſhort time loſt their lives, and tranquillity was reſtored.

The Emperor, in this interval of peace, employed the army in different public works, and exerted himſelf in various other things, for the public good. But his virtues ill ſuited a licentious ſoldiery, and they murdered him, after he had reigned a little more than ſix years.

Carus, the captain of the prætorians, and who probably had a ſhare in his death, ſucceeded him. He began with vanqniſhing the Sarmatians, after which he was ſucceſsful in a war againſt Perſia. This prince loſt his life in about a year after his exaltation, by lightning, as it was alledged; and his ſon and ſucceſſor, Numerianus, was cut off in about two months afterwards by Aper, his father-in-law. Aper had expected to be raiſed to the purple, but Diocleſian, the Comes Domeſticorum, was proclaimed, and Aper being thereupon brought before him, he immediately plunged his ſword into his breaſt. This act of Diocleſian was in conſequence of what a Druideſs once ſaid to him, that he would be Emperor after killing a boar. Till now, he had in vain hunted and deſtroyed that animal; and Aper being the latin name of it, he conceived this to be the accompliſhment of the prediction. A new æra much uſed in Aſia took its riſe from his elevation, which happened on the 17th day of September 284.

Carinus, another ſon of Carus, who commanded an army in Gaul, had aſſumed the purple; having been created Cæſar by his father. But after a ſhort oppoſition, he loſt his life, and Diocleſian was univerſally acknowledged. He, however, of his own accord, aſſociated with him Maximian, a brave and able general. Maximian then took the command in the Weſt, where he exerted himſelf to repel the barbarians, and put down ſome revolts: whilſt Diocleſian in the Eaſt, proved victorious over the Perſians, Saracens, and the other enemies of the Empire.

At this period, there were ſo many foreign foes and inteſtine diſſenſions, that the Emperors reſolved to raiſe two able men to the dignity of Cæſar. Galerius was accordingly fixed on by Diocleſian, and Conſtantius by Maximian. They then took the command in four different parts, which certainly had many advantages; but the expence of ſo many courts became enormous.

The arms of Galerius had the moſt ſplendid ſucceſs, wreſting from the Perſians five provinces, never before ſubjected by Rome, and by which the Tigris, inſtead of the Euphrates, became the boundary in that quarter. This gave him a weight fatal to the Chriſtians, to whom he was an avowed enemy; and what was reckoned the tenth general perſecution, commenced in the year 303; which, from its ſeverity, ſeems to have intended the utter extirpation of that religion.

The Emperors and Cæſars now met at Rome, where Diocleſian, to whom the others owed their greatneſs, alone triumphed. He was, however, ſoon after for a conſiderable time deprived of his ſenſes; and, on his recovery, he thought proper to reſign his high authority, which example was followed by Maximian. Some accounts ſay, that the power of Galerius was the cauſe of theſe reſignations; whilſt others alledge they were voluntary: the ſubſequent conduct of Diocleſian, in my opinion,

proves, that his was ſo; whatever might be the motive that influenced Maximian.

On this abdication, two new Cæſars were nominated by Diocleſian, but at the inſtance of Galerius. Theſe were Severus and Maximin. This was very diſpleaſing to Conſtantine, who had highly diſtinguiſhed himſelf, and who was ſon to Conſtantius. He therefore withdrew from ſerving under Galerius, and repaired to the court of his father; who commanded in Britain and Gaul. On the death of Conſtantius, his army proclaimed Conſtantine Emperor. Galerius refuſed to acknowledge him as ſuch, at the ſame raiſing Severus to be his colleague. He however offered to admit Conſtantine as Cæſar.

Whilſt this altercation took place, the ſenate and people of Rome invited Maximian to reaſſume the purple, and to aſſociate with him his ſon Maxentius, who had married a daughter of Galerius. Maximian accordingly did ſo, at the ſametime ſoliciting Diocleſian to likewiſe re-aſcend the throne. But the latter had ſo attached

himſelf to gardening and a privatelife, that every argument proved ineffectual. Whatever faults Diocleſian might have had, this argued true greatneſs of mind: and I behold him in retirement in a point of view far ſuperior to that, in which he almoſt ſwayed a world. He ſurvived his abdication about nine years, and is ſaid by ſome authors to have put an end to himſelf, on account of the ill treatment he latterly received from thoſe in power.

Severus immediately marched his forces to oppoſe Maximian. On the two armies approaching each other, moſt of his troops deſerted to his opponent; on which he ſurrendered on the terms of his life being ſpared; but Maximian, in open violation of the treaty, put him to death. He then courted an alliance with Conſtantine, who had juſt repelled an eruption of the Barbarians, and it being acceded to, Maximian gave him a daughter in marriage. Much about the ſame time, Galerius aſſociated with him as joint Emperors,

Licinius and Maximin, the latter of whom was his nephew.

Maximian, jealous of his ſon's being equal in power, endeavoured to have him depoſed; and failing in that attempt, he ſoon after retired, for the ſecond time, to a private ſtation. In this capacity he viſited his ſon-in-law, Conſtantine; but the love of power again prevailing, he ſtrove to ſupplant him. Tho' this was detected and forgiven, he formed a new plot, which was to take away Conſtantine's life; and it being diſcovered, Maximian was at length put to death. Galerius died much about the ſame timeof a loathſome diſeaſe, worms iſſuing from different parts of his body. He is ſaid to have felt it a judgment for his dreadful ſeverities towards the Chriſtians; and in his laſt illneſs, it is certain that he revoked his edicts againſt them.

Licinius and Maximin now ſhared what had belonged to Galerius in the Eaſt. In Africa, one Alexander had aſſumed the purple; but the generals of Maxentius defeated and put him

to death, at the ſame time treating the countries that had acknowledged him with great ſeverity. Maxentius who was in poſſeſſion of Rome and Italy behaved with the utmoſt depravity, in which he was imitated by his forces, and cruelty, avarice and lewdneſs were the leading features of his character.

A declared animoſity having taken place between Conſtantine and Maxentius, the former reſolved to attack the latter in Italy. Conſtantine was already a friend to the Chriſtians, if not a Chriſtian himſelf; but during this march, any doubts he might have had were fully removed. At midday a pillar of light, ſhaped like a croſs, was ſeen in the heavens, with the words "in this conquer." The night following Conſtantine, conceived himſelf divinely ordered to take the croſs for his ſtandard, with thoſe words ſtamped upon it. He accordingly obeyed, and his ſucceſs was fully anſwerable.

There are few events better aſcertained than this. Euſebius, an hiſtorian of undoubt-

ed veracity, declares he had the account from Conſtantine himſelf, and that he verified it on oath. A number of other writers, who lived then or immediately after, alſo relate it. And had it been falſe, it is impoſſible, that they would have done ſo, as the whole army of Conſtantine had the power of expoſing ſuch an impoſture.

Conſtantine, thus encouraged, quickly paſſed the Alps, every where defeating thoſe who oppoſed him. On his approach to Rome Maxentius conſulted the Sybilline Oracles, and the anſwer he received from thoſe who took care of them, was, that on that day, the great enemy of Rome ſhould periſh. This he conceived meant Conſtantine, but giving battle he loſt it, and was drowned in the Tiber.

Rome received the conqueror with the higheſt congratulations, which he juſtified by a variety of benevolent acts. Amongſt other reformations he totally diſbanded the Prætorians. But the favours he ſhewed the Chriſtians very

ſoon offended all thoſe who adhered to idolatry.

Conſtantine at this time formed an alliance with Licinius, to whom he gave a daughter in marriage. Licinius was then ſent againſt Maximin, whom he defeated and put to death: and moſt of Maximin's friends, favourites and relations, were partakers of his fate.

Conſtantine and Licinius were now maſters of the Empire, and notwithſtanding the near connexion betweeh them, they became competitors for the ſole power. This war however was of ſhort duration, and ended in 314 by a treaty that gave to Licinius, Egypt and Libya in Africa; Thrace and one of the Mœſia's in Europe; and all the Aſiatic provinces. In a year or two after this, the two Emperors declared Criſpus and Conſtantine the ſons of Conſtantine, and Licinius the ſon of Licinius, Cæſars.

In the year 322 Conſtantine marched againſt the Sarmatians whom he defeated, as he did alſo the Goths; but purſuing the latter into

the territories of Licinius, it produced a new war between them. In it Conſtantine proved victorious, and Licinius, together with Martinianus whom the latter had made the partner of his power, were forced to abdicate. They were afterwards, put to death, notwithſtanding their lives were to be ſpared; and I do not think any ſufficient grounds appear to warrant this breach of treaty.

Conſtantine, now ſole maſter of the Empire, after creating his third ſon Conſtans Cæſar, iſſued an edict, for ſhutting up the heathen temples throughout his dominions; and at the ſame time, he declared that Chriſtianity ſhould be from thenceforth the eſtabliſhed religion. He alſo prohibited the exhibitions of gladiators, and he forbade engagements for the future between criminals, and beaſts of prey. By theſe attacks on the religion and amuſements of the citizens of Rome, he became extremely obnoxious to them; and on his return to that city, they did not fail to ſhew their deteſtation. The only revenge he took,

was removing the ſeat of Empire, to the ancient Byzantium, which he highly improved, under the new name of Conſtantinople.

Conſtantine, though ſucceſsful in public affairs, was peculiarly unfortunate in his own family. His Empreſs Fauſta accuſed Criſpus, the offspring of a former marriage, for an attempt upon her chaſtity, and he was executed by the orders of his incenſed father. The falſeneſs of this charge coming afterwards to light, his feelings are eaſier conceived, than deſcribed, and Fauſta, who was alſo proved to have been an infamous adultereſs, was put to death, together with the acceſſaries of her crimes.

In the year 335, and the 30th of Conſtantine's reign, he celebrated the anniverſary of his being firſt raiſed to the Imperial dignity. This was performed with great magnificence, at his new ſeat of Empire: after which he held two councils of Eccleſiaſtics, the one at Tyre, and the other at Jeruſalem. They were called to decide the conteſt between Arius and

Athanaſius, two Chriſtian Biſhops, who diſputed the nature of the Deity. The latter, alledged God was compoſed of three perſons, and the former that he was one diſtinct being. Theſe councils declared in favour of Arius; and Athanaſius with three other Biſhops, who had been his ſtrenuous ſupporters, were ſent into baniſhment.

Conſtantine now allotted to thoſe deſtined to ſucceed him, their particular provinces. To his ſon Conſtantine he gave Gaul, Spain and Britain—to Conſtantius another ſon, Syria, Egypt and Aſia Minor, under the general appellation of the Orient.—To his third ſon Conſtans, Italy, Illyricum and the provinces in Africa, Egypt excepted.—To his nephew Dalmatius: Thrace, Macedon and Achaia. And to another nephew named Annibalianus: Pontus, Cappadocia and Armenia Minor.

A notion prevailed in theſe times, that if Baptiſm was poſtponed till men were dying, their ſouls muſt be happy. This opinion had been embraced by Conſtantine, and finding his end approaching, he had the ceremony per-

formed. He ſurvived it a few days, during which he was dreſſed only in white, and then with the calmeſt reſignation he breathed his laſt, in the 64th year of his age, and in the year 337, of the Chriſtian æra.

Whilſt the Chriſtian writers extol Conſtantine beyond all other emperors, the heathen authors paint him as one of the worſt amongſt mankind. That he was a prince of great ability, is allowed by both; and I ſhall only obſerve, that in regard to religion, his character is of no real conſequence, as it pleaſes God to make both good and bad men ſubſervient to his purpoſes.

From the year 136 to the death of Conſtantine, the only poets worth mentioning are Nemeſianus and Oppian. In hiſtory, Arrian, who was alſo a philoſopher, Dio Caſſius, Herodian and Juſtin, flouriſhed. Ptolemy was highly celebrated for his treatiſe on geography. Ælian, ſurnamed Honey-mouth, wrote on natural hiſtory. Galen compoſed a moſt able work on medicine. Papinian, whom Caracalla put to

death, left treatiſes on the laws which were in high eſtimation. Longinus's treatiſe on the ſublime and beautiful, is a criticiſm never excelled. Lucian wrote dialogues, remarkable for their wit and juſt ſatire. Celſus, an Epicurean philoſopher, wrote one of the ableſt works againſt Chriſtianity. Artemidorus gave a treatiſe on remarkable dreams that had been accompliſhed. Polyænus on the ſtratagems of illuſtrious commanders. Cenſorinus on antiquities and chronology. Pauſanias wrote an account of Greece. Philoſtratus the life of Apollonius Tyanenſis with great ability: as did Diogenes Laertius the lives of the philoſophers. Juda Hakkadoſh, a Jewiſh Rabbi celebrated for his learning, and who was the friend and preceptor of the Emperor Antoninus, collected the conſtitutions and traditions of the Jewiſh doctors that had preceded him. Apuleius wrote on various ſubjects in proſe and verſe, and he, Porphyrus and Plotinus were the moſt eminent Platonic philoſophers of that period: and Panudes, Sabellinus, Arnobius, Apollinaris,

Athenæus, Heſychius, Pollux, and Aulus Gellius, were diſtinguiſhed for their works and learning: it is however doubtful, whether Heſychius lived in this period or in the 7th century.

After Conſtantine had fully eſtabliſhed himſelf, he divided the Empire into four præfectures, over which he appointed four officers called præfecti prætorii. Theſe præfectures were called the Orient, Illyricum, Italy and Gaul. Orient contained the five dioceſſes of Thrace, Aſia Minor, Pontus, Egypt, and the Orient. Theſe dioceſſes were again ſubdivided into provinces. Thrace had five, Aſia Minor ten, Pontus eleven, Egypt ſix, and the Orient fifteen, making in all forty-ſeven provinces. Illyricum had only the dioceſſes of Macedon, and Dacia, the firſt of which had ſix, and the latter five provinces. Gaul had three dioceſſes, one of its own name, and Britain, and Spain. Gaul had ſeventeen, Britain five, and Spain ſeven provinces. Italy had alſo three dioceſſes, one called after it, another Illyricum Occidentale, and the third Africa. The firſt of theſe dioceſſes had ſeventeen provinces, the ſecond ſix,

and the third five. Thus the whole Empire was claſſed into four præfectures, divided into thirteen dioceſſes, which were again ſubdivided into 115 provinces.

The Præfects were the firſt officers next to the Emperors and Cæſars, and under them were other ſubordinate ones called Proconſuls, Vicars, Rectors, Conſulars, Correctors, and Preſidents, all of whom had their reſpective civil departments. In the military line there were the Dux or Duke inſtituted by Diocleſian, and continued by Conſtantine, and alſo the Counts of the Empire.

I ſhall conclude this letter with a conciſe view of the alterations in the Church from the year 136 to the death of Conſtantine. Towards the cloſe of the ſecond century, meetings of the heads of the Churches began to take place, which in the eaſt were called Synods, and in the weſt, Councils; and what they agreed on, were called Canons of the Church. The Biſhops, when they firſt met in this way, were mere deputies from their reſpective con-

gregations, to expreſs their ſentiments; but they very ſoon thought proper to exerciſe a will of their own; and at length they acted independently. The preſidents which of courſe muſt be choſen, gave riſe to the idea of metropolitans. When more biſhops met than were under one Metropolitan, it gave an origin to the Patriarchs, who were to preſide over the Metropolitans of a certain diſtrict.

As the form of Church government became complicated, ſo did its creeds, its rites, and its ceremonies. In Egypt towards the year 200, a body of enthuſiaſts, who ſtiled themſelves Aſcetics appeared. They neither married, nor dealt in merchandiſe; they abſtained from eating any kind of fleſh, or drinking any ſort of wine, and they alſo lived in ſolitary places, and practiſed many voluntary afflictions and ſeverities.

Amongſt the various diſputes which already degraded and afflicted the Church, was that of the time when Eaſter ſhould be celebrated. The Clergy of the Eaſt inſiſted on a particular

day in the year, whether Sunday or not, whilſt thoſe of the Weſt contended it muſt be always on the firſt day of the week.—Another controverſy was created by Manes, a Perſian magi, who had embraced Chriſtianity. He inſiſted he was the Holy Ghoſt or comforter promiſed by Chriſt, who was to expound all difficulties: and though he was put to death by Varanes, king of Perſia, his doctrines long ſurvived him. The greateſt conteſt of all was that between the Arians and Trinitarians, which I have elſewhere mentioned.

Before, and in the days of Conſtantine, Heatheniſm and Chriſtianity had formed a blenditure, partly from the folly, and partly from the villainy of the Chriſtian clergy. Some were influenced by a zeal for making converts, but others were governed by the motive of gain, which was in proportion to the number of their followers.

Though the clergy had no legal eſtabliſhment before Conſtantine, yet they had already from voluntary contributions, acquired conſiderable

riches. At firſt, thoſe of each diſtrict had what their congregations gave them in common. But about the year 220, a diſtinction was introduced favorable to the biſhops, who from thenceforth obtained a large proportion of the money collected, and the chief ſees were become ſo deſirable as to be objects of competition.

Prior to Chriſtianity being made the eſtabliſhed religion, three patriarchs had been appointed. Theſe were the biſhops of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria. The firſt was allowed precedence merely as reſiding in the capital of the Empire: but no act of ſupremacy had as yet in any inſtance been admitted.

As the duties enjoined by the churches multiplied, ſo did their officers; and ſub-deacons, oſtiarii, exorciſts, and readers, had every where ariſen. This added to external ſhew, but vain controverſies and ceremonies were at the ſame time ſapping the purity of Chriſtianity.

Such was the ſtate of the church when Conſtantine made it the eſtabliſhed religion, and blended it with the government. Biſhops had their particular diſtricts; archbiſhops preſided over a certain number of them; and five patriarchs were placed over all; thoſe of Conſtantinople and Jeruſalem being added to the three before mentioned. But Conſtantine kept the ſupreme power over the church in his own hands, preſiding at the firſt general council that ever was called, and which was held at Nice.

The church being thus united to the civil power, eſtates were for the firſt time allowed to be purchaſed for its uſe. Every perſon was likewiſe now at liberty to make bequeſts in its favor. Conſtantine himſelf alſo contributed liberally to the ſupport of the clergy, who every day roſe in wealth and conſequence. But you will ſee in the ſequel, that their depravities encreaſed in an exact proportion.

The ableſt writers and advocates for Chriſtianity from Adrian to the death of Conſtantine were Euſebius, Polycarp, a diſciple of St.

John the Evangeliſt, Theophilus, Melito, St. Irenæus, Theodorus, Gregory, Cyprianus, and Methodius, all of whom were biſhops: thoſe of inferior rank in the church were Origen, called the Adamantine, from his zeal and firmneſs, and who wrote a full and able anſwer to Celſus; Juſtin Martyr, Tertullian, T. F. Clemens, Tatian, and Felix. Of theſe St. Irenæus, Cyprianus, Methodius, and Juſtin, ſuffered martyrdom.

The chief ſects that diſturbed the harmony of the church during this period were the Marcioniſts, founded by Marcion, the Montaniſts by Montanus, the Manichæans by Manes, the Sabellians by Sabellinus, and the Meſſalians by Sabas.

LETTER FIFTH.

ON the death of Conſtantine, a number of his relations were murdered by the ſoldiery, to which his ſon Conſtantius was at leaſt privy. Dalmatius and Annibalianus were amongſt thoſe who fell, and the three ſons of the late Emperor then divided the territories of thoſe unfortunate Princes among them. Conſtans and Conſtantine, two of theſe brothers, ſoon after made war with each other. This ended in the death of the latter, and his dominions were added to thoſe of the former. Conſtans defended himſelf againſt ſome attacks made by the Franks and Perſians, but he very ſoon fell a victim to domeſtic treachery; and Magnentius, who headed the conſpiracy, ſucceeded to the purple. He then put to death numbers whom he conſidered as enemies, amongſt whom was Nepotianus, who had become an open competitor.

Conſtantius, the only ſurviving ſon of Conſtantine the Great, determined to take vengeance on Magnentius. Whilſt on his march, he was joined by Veteranio, who with the title of Emperor headed the forces from Pannonia. Conſtantius for the preſent appeared to receive him as his colleague, but the joint armies ſoon after depoſed Veteranio, who was ſuffered to return to a life of privacy.

Decentius, a near relation or brother of Magnentius, at this time commanded in Gaul, with the rank of Cæſar. In order to prevent his going to the aid of Magnentius, Conſtantius had the Franks and Saxons ſtirred up to attack that quarter. Having accompliſhed this, he proceeded againſt his competitor, and engaging him at Murſa, he gained a complete victory; the immediate conſequence of which was, Africa, Spain, and Sicily declaring in his favor. Magnentius then retired to Gaul, whither he was ſo cloſely purſued, that in a fit of deſpair, he cauſed his mother, Deſiderius his brother, whom he had created Cæſar, and

all his friends and relations, that were within his reach, to be put to death. He then finiſhed the tragedy by his own ſuicide; and, not long after, Decentius followed the example. Conſtantius, after this, found a new competitor in one Sylvanus, who ſpeedily came to his end, and the Empire became again united under one head.

When Conſtantius took the field againſt Magnentius, he appointed Gallus, his couſin-german, to command in the Eaſt, with the rank of Cæſar; at the ſame time giving him a ſiſter in marriage. That Prince, however, acted with ſo much cruelty and avarice, that the Emperor had him put to death, together with the chief inſtruments of his mal-adminiſtration. He then raiſed Julian, the brother of Gallus, to the rank held by the latter; at the ſame time giving him alſo a ſiſter in marriage: and the Empire being preſſed by ene-enemies in different quarters, they headed ſeperate armies; Julian very highly diſtinguiſhing himſelf in the conteſts that followed.

Conſtantius exerted all his power to aboliſh Idolatry. He made it death to pray or ſacrifice to idols, or to conſult oracles, augurs, aruſpices, diviners, or magicians, the latter of whom he ordered to be thrown to wild beaſts: and he commanded the Altar to Victory to be removed from the ſenate-houſe, before he would enter it. He next turned his attention to the controverſy between the Chriſtians, as to the nature of GOD; and ſiding with the Arians, he treated the Trinitarian biſhops with great ſeverity.

The Perſians having again attacked the Empire, Conſtantius went in perſon againſt them. Whilſt he was thus employed, he received intelligence that Julian had aſſumed the purple. This, the latter by letter endeavoured to palliate; alledging, he was forced to it by his ſoldiers. But Conſtantius did not give credit to this; and, as ſoon as he had beat the Perſians, he ſet out to chaſtiſe his ſon-in-law. He, how-

ever, died on the march, after reiguing 25 years, and not without ſuſpicion of poiſon.

Julian had apoſtatiſed immediately after his elevation; thereby ſecuring all the heathens to his party. He now erected a court for the trial of the late Emperor's miniſters, ſeveral of whom were juſtly condemned and executed. And he alſo gratified the people by the abolition of many uſeleſs and expenſive appointments.

The apoſtacy of Julian I am inclined to think ſincere. This opinion I form from his ſubſequent conduct. He offered numerous and expenſive ſacrifices to his idols: he encouraged magicians, ſorcerers, and every kind of divination: and he alſo re-opened the Oracles of Delphos, Delos, and Dodona, all of whom he conſulted. Their reſponſes being favorable, he marched againſt the Perſians; and was ſo certain of victory, that he refuſed to pay the Saracens a penſion that had been before ſtipulated, whereupon they joined the enemy.

Julian at firſt gained ſome victories; but ſoon after died of a wound that proved mortal. It is ſaid by the writers of that time, that a ſpectre appeared to him before he took the title of Emperor, in the garb of the Genius of the Empire, telling him, it had only a ſhort time to continue; and that he ſaw the ſame appearance the night before he was wounded. He ſurvived Conſtantius only twenty months, and had been Emperor about three years.

The great object of Julian was, the overthrow of Chriſtianity; and altho' he put none to death, he ſo far perſecuted the Chriſtians, as to exclude them from all offices and appointments. It had been predicted in the ſacred writings, that Judea was to continue deſolate, and the Jews to be diſperſed, till the ſecond coming of Chriſt. To give the lie to this, he reſolved to rebuild the Temple of Jeruſalem, and to reaſſemble the Jews: but it is ſaid, and I believe truly, that the workmen were ſtopped by miraculous appearances. Julian's greateſt errors aroſe from his ill-placed zeal for a falſe reli-

gion; and, in other reſpects, he appears to have been worthy of Empire.

This prince having fallen in the midſt of an enemy's country, the great object of the army was a gallant commander. They, therefore, fixed on Jovian; and the barbarians, attacking the frontiers of the Empire in different quarters, he wiſely concluded a treaty with Perſia, by which the five provinces conquered by Galerius, and ſome other places of little importance, were ſurrendered.

Jovian was as zealous a Chriſtian, as his immediate predeceſſor was a Pagan. He, therefore, immediately repealed all the laws againſt Chriſtianity. He, however, reigned only eight months; and on his death, Valentinian, a man of humble birth, but who had raiſed himſelf by his abilities and courage, was elected. He aſſociated with him his brother Valens, to whom he allotted Thrace, Egypt, and all the Aſiatic provinces. The reſt he adminiſtered himſelf; and ſoon after had his ſon Gratian, tho' only a boy, proclaimed joint Emperor.

Beſides internal commotions, they had alſo a number of barbarians to repel. In Africa, one Firmus took the title of Emperor; but Theodoſius, a gallant officer, who had often diſtinguiſhed himſelf, being ſent againſt him, Firmus put an end to himſelf, and the inſurrection.

Valentinian, who was a very mixed character, and in whom cruelty predominated, died in 375; and the army obliged Gratian to aſſociate his brother, Valentinian, then only five years old, in the Empire. One of the firſt acts of Gratian was, the execution of Maximinus, a wicked miniſter of his father's, together with thoſe who had been moſt active in his bad meaſures. But he, at the ſame time, thro' falſe information, ſhed the blood of a great and innocent man. This was the gallant Theodoſius; and his ſon of the ſame name, who, tho' very young, had alſo diſtinguiſhed himſelf, retired to Spain his native country.

In the Eaſt, Valens ſubdued two inſurrections; putting their leaders, Procopius and

Marcellus, to death. He had alſo ſome ſucceſsful wars with the barbarians, and ſuppreſsed the Iſaurian Robbers, a banditti that had greatly annoyed the Eaſtern provinces. But after the death of Valentinian, he had ſtill more formidable enemies to encounter. He had formerly given a ſettlement in Thrace to a Gothic nation, whom the Hunns had expelled from their country. Theſe Goths now entered Greece, where they were joined by numbers, who were impatient under the heavy burthen of their taxes: and on Valerius's giving them battle, he was defeated and ſlain.

Valens was remarkable for his zeal againſt Magic; on which account ſeverals were executed. He was equally zealous againſt the Trinitarians, who had been encouraged by Jovian during his ſhort reign; and this bloody bigot had eighty of their biſhops executed.

Gratian, on hearing of Valens's death, ſet out for Greece. When he arrived there, he found Conſtantinople beſieged by the Goths and their confederates. He, therefore, threw

himſelf into that capital, and ſending for the young Theodoſius, he in ſome degree atoned for his error as to his father, by making him Emperor of the Eaſt. This was alſo extremely pleaſing to the people, as Theodoſius, beſides being a man of high reputation, was of the Trajan family.

By the exertions of theſe two Princes, the Goths were entirely defeated. Various enemies, however, appeared in different quarters, and notwithſtanding their utmoſt efforts, ſeveral ſettlements were made by the Barbarians within the boundaries of both the eaſtern and weſtern parts of the Empire, in the latter of which, the Lombards had now for the firſt time made their appearance.

During the reigns of Gratian and Theodoſius, the Trinitarian biſhops had their turn of power, both thoſe princes being of their opinion, and an Œcumenical Council being called, the Arians were condemned as heretics.

In Gaul and Britain an officer of the name of Maximus became a competitor for the Em-

pire. Gratian marched againſt him, but being deſerted by his army, he loſt his life. This happened about eight years after the death of his father, and he left behind him the character of an able and virtuous prince.

Valentinian the IId was now only 13 or 14 years old, but by the prudence of his mother Juſtina, and Probus his chief miniſter, Italy, Illyricum, and Africa were preſerved to him. Maximus would, however, have probably deprived him of all, had not Theodoſius moſt actively interfered. In conſequence of his exertions, Maximus and his ſon, whom he had made his colleague, were taken and put to death. Theodoſius then forgave the reſt of the revolters, and having fully eſtabliſhed the authority of Valentinian in the weſt, he returned to his own territories.

Before Theodoſius departed from Rome, he did all he could to aboliſh idolatry. The heathen deities were therefore removed from the temples, but as many of thoſe images were pieces of excellent workmanſhip, inſtead of

deſtroying them, he placed them as ornaments to the public buildings. This worthy Prince rectified ſeveral other abuſes, and a law was paſſed, condemning all who ſhould be detected in any unnatural luſt, to be burned to death.

Whilſt Theodoſius was in the weſt, the Pagans in Alexandria had maſſacred their Chriſtian fellow-citizens. That Emperor, on being informed of this, ordered their heathen temples to be pulled down, which had only before been ſhut up, and their god Serapis to be broken in pieces. The Pagan temples were alſo deſtroyed in ſeveral other places, and as far as was conſiſtent with humanity, he exerted himſelf againſt the heathen worſhip. Conceiving the Arians to be wrong, he had alſo endeavoured to ſuppreſs their opinions; but though they had been condemned in a general council as I have before mentioned, his clemency prevented the deciſion being followed up by any act of cruelty.

Valentinian the IId having been in vain ſolicited to reſtore the heathen deities to their

temples, was at length murdered by a Pagan general whom he had diſmiſſed. His name was Arbogaſtes, and not being of conſequence enough to obtain the purple, he gave his ſupport to Eugenius who had better pretenſions. This event called Theodoſius again into Italy, on which Eugenius was deſtroyed by thoſe about him, and Arbogaſtes put himſelf to death. There being now no righful heir to the empire of the Weſt, Theodoſius gave it to his ſon Honorius, then only eleven years old, at the ſame time appointing Stilico an able general, to adminiſter public affairs during the minority. Theodoſius did not long ſurvive this arrangement, dying in his 50th year; and it may, I think, with truth be ſaid, he was equalled by few, and excelled by none of the Roman Emperors.

Theodoſius bequeathed the Eaſtern Empire, which contained all Greece, and the Aſiatic provinces, to his eldeſt ſon Arcadius; and as he was only 18, he appointed Ruſinus his guardian, till he attained his full age. Thus

both Empires were entirely under the direction of Miniſters who poſſeſſed great talents, but who were alike deſtitute of integrity. Whilſt they reſpectively plundered the people committed to their care, they ſought to ſupplant each other. Stilico alledged that the late Emperor, a little before his death, which happened in Italy, had given the care of both Princes to him, and he prepared to enforce this claim by arms. On the other hand, Rufinus endeavoured to procure a marriage between Arcadius and his daughter. In this he was counteracted by Eutropius a favorite eunuch, who prevailed on his young maſter to marry Eudoxia, a woman of high ſpirit, and who immediately reſolved to humble the miniſter. As for Rufinus, he aimed at being aſſociated in the Empire, and in order to bring this about, he ſecretly encouraged the Hunns to invade the eaſtern provinces, and the Goths to fall on Thrace, Macedon, Pannonia, and Theſſaly. A creature of his then betrayed the ſtreights of Thermopylæ, whereby all Greece was opened to the ravages

of thoſe Barbarians, of whom Athila was the moſt conſpicuous leader. In this dangerous ſituation, Stilico made his appearance with a conſiderable force, and would have expelled the invaders but for the intrigues of Ruſinus. He perſuaded Arcadius that Stilico's deſigns were hoſtile to him, and the young Prince under this idea demanded a body of forces belonging to the eaſtern Empire, that had gone over to Italy with Theodoſius; and alſo half the treaſure in the poſſeſſion of that Prince at the time of his death. Stilico complied, but he previouſly took care to ſecure Gainas, the commander of thoſe eaſtern forces, in his intereſt.

Ruſinus now thought the ſtate of affairs would enſure his being joint Emperor; and he was ſo certain of ſucceſs, that he had prepared the Imperial ornaments. His creatures in the army were to demand his elevation at his next appearance, but Gainas, on the approach of Ruſinus in company with Arcadius, being aware of this intention, gave a ſignal to ſome among his troops, which occaſioned the inſtant

death of the miniſter: and Arcadius either would not, or could not, puniſh the offenders.

Stilico, with the remainder of his forces, in the mean time had nearly driven the Goths out of Peloponneſus. But Eutropius, the new miniſter, was as jealous of Stilico, as Rufinus had been. He therefore prevailed on Arcadius to declare him a public enemy; and his Eaſtern property, which was conſiderable, he cauſed to be confiſcated. A revolt under one Gildo was then ſtirred up in the Weſtern provinces in Africa, which obliged Stilico to abandon Greece. That general now ſaw his only chance of ſafety, was the ſupport of the young Honorius. He therefore brought about a marriage between that prince and his daughter. As for the commotion in Africa, it ended in Gildo's being taken priſoner, and putting himſelf to death.

Though Stilico had retired, Arcadius's generals were able to keep in check the different bodies of Barbarians; and Gainas had

raiſed himſelf to a good deal of conſequence. By his intrigues, he now procured the diſgrace of Eutropius. That miniſter for a ſhort time ſaved his life by taking ſhelter in a church, thoſe places of worſhip being already, like the Pagan temples, deemed aſylums. But the eunuch, having afterwards of his own accord left it, was taken and executed. This gave great ſatisfaction to the people as his adminiſtration had been juſtly odious.

Gainas in order to ſecure his power had ſecretly connected himſelf with Tribigild, who commanded a body of Goths, in the pay of the Emperor. They now acted openly together, and Arcadius being obliged to obey their directions, ſeveral perſons, whom they dreaded, were put to death. Eudoxia however by her exertions, got the Emperor's affairs into a better ſituation. And both Gainas and Tribigild loſt their lives in the conteſt that followed. Eudoxia now took the title of Auguſta, and her image being ſent to the armies was equally honored with that of the Emperor.

As the Eaſtern became in fact perfectly diſtinct from the Weſtern Empire after the death of Theodoſius, I ſhall here continue my account of the former to the end of this æra.

Arcadius dying in 408, his ſon Theodoſius the II, then only eight years old, ſucceeded him. From thence to the year 414 affairs of ſtate were managed by Anthemius the prime miniſter, and the Empire enjoyed a conſiderable degree of tranquillity. Pulcheria the young Emperor's ſiſter, though only ſixteen, was then proclaimed Auguſta, and took the lead in the management of public affairs; in every thing diſplaying a good heart, and a vigorous underſtanding. There was one particular act of Pulcheria that reflected on her peculiar honor. A lady, named Eudocia, applied to her for the redreſs of ſome wrongs ſhe had ſuſtained. In the converſation that followed, the ſtranger diſplayed great addreſs, ability and knowledge. To this was added uncommon beauty, and though deſtitute of rank and riches, the young

princeſs thought her worthy of a throne. She therefore reſolved if poſſible to raiſe her to it, and afterwards brought about a union with her brother.

In a war which took place with Perſia, Theodoſius who had now attained to manhood, had the advantage, and on the death of his uncle Honorius without iſſue, he found himſelf at liberty to viſit the Weſt. There he found that John, the ſecretary of the late Emperor, had uſurped the ſceptre, but he was ſoon defeated and ſlain. Theodoſius then generouſly eſtabliſhed Valentinian the III a nephew of Honorius by the female line; and he afterwards gave him his daughter Eudoxia in marriage.

Theodoſius on his return from Italy completed the deſtruction of the heathen worſhip in his provinces, by forbidding idolatry on pain of death, deſtroying at the ſame time all the temples that had been ſuffered to remain. He alſo cauſed a code of laws to be digeſted and publiſhed about the year 438, which was not

only received in his dominions, but likewiſe in what was left of the Weſtern Empire.

At this period, the moſt dreadful of all paſſions invaded his breaſt. He became jealous of his Empreſs, not only with Paulinus his favourite miniſter, but with others, all of whom he cauſed to be executed. He ſuffered Eudocia however to retire to Jeruſalem, with a great deal of wealth, that ſhe had acquired: and from her conduct there, and her dying declarations, it is generally ſuppoſed ſhe was innocent.

Theodoſius, alarmed at the progreſs of Genſeric king of the Vandals in the Weſt, would have checked him, had he not been obliged to defend himſelf againſt the Perſians, and the Hunns. With the latter he was forced to make peace on the moſt humiliating terms, Attila their king at the ſame time inſultingly declaring he was maſter of both the Roman Emperors. Theodoſius did not long ſurvive this event, and dying without male iſſue in the year 450, and his only daughter

being married to Valentinian the III, his ſiſter Pulcheria, was raiſed to the Empire.

The former conduct of Pulcheria fully juſtified this election, and if poſſible ſhe now added to the public eſtimation. The perilous times in which ſhe lived required a man of uncommon talents to preſerve the ſtate. She therefore gave both it and herſelf a maſter, by marrying Marcian: but at the ſame time, being now advanced in years, ſhe ſtipulated that the marriage ſhould never be conſummated. The propriety of her choice was ſoon evinced, for almoſt immediately after, on Attila's ſending for the tribute that Theodoſius had agreed to, the anſwer returned was, that the new Emperor had gold for his friends, but ſteel for enemies.

Thrace and Illyricum had been nearly depopulated. Marcian, therefore, thought it prudent to grant ſettlements in them to ſome of the barbarous nations that had been troubleſome, on condition that their princes ſhould acknowledge the Eaſtern Emperors as their ſu-

periors. The chief of theſe new comers were the Oſtrogoths, and he hoped to make them and the others a barrier againſt remoter ſavages. He died in the year 457 having ſurvived Pulcheria about 4 years, and to give his character in a few words, he added piety and ſimplicity of manners to true courage, and a ſound underſtanding.

Leo, an officer of eſtabliſhed merit, was Marcian's ſucceſſor. He was ſoon engaged in a war with the Oſtrogoths, whom Marcian had latterly found it neceſſary to keep quiet, by means of a penſion. Leo however not only got rid of that badge of inferiority, but obliged them to give him a child of the royal blood named Theodoric as a hoſtage for their peaceable behaviour: and in another place you will ſee this young prince, eſtabliſhing himſelf in Italy. In an expedition, which Leo joined the Weſtern Emperor in, againſt Genſeric; he was not ſo ſucceſsful, 50,000 of his forces having periſhed on the occaſion.

A general of the name of Aſpar having been very inſtrumental in the elevation of Leo, that Emperor had from gratitude given a daughter in marriage to his ſon. Leo now beſtowed another on Zeno, who was appointed the chief commander of his forces. Aſpar and his ſon were ſoon after this accuſed of a plot to deſtroy Leo, and whether it was real or not, they were both put to death. A revolt of no conſequence followed; and it being ſuppoſed that the Arians, of whom Aſpar was the avowed friend, was at the bottom of it, a ſevere edict was iſſued againſt them.

On the death of Leo, a ſon of his daughter by Zeno, though only ſix years old was acknowledged; but his father was to have the adminiſtration of affairs during the minority. The child however ſoon after dying, Zeno was ſuffered to aſſume the purple. But Thrace being attacked by the Hunns, and Meſopotamia by the Saracens, he was depoſed, as he abandoned himſelf to the moſt vicious pleaſures, inſtead of any martial exer-

tion. Baſiliſcus was then raiſed to the Imperial dignity, and nothing material happening in his reign prior to 476, I ſhall return to the affairs of the Weſt.

Honorius who was Emperor of the Weſt, when Arcadius was on the throne of the Eaſt, you have before ſeen under the care of Stilico during his minority. After that miniſter's return from Greece as I have elſewhere related, Alaric quitting the Eaſtern provinces entered Italy, in conjunction with Radagaiſus king of the Hunns. Various conflicts followed, in one of which the latter was taken and put to death; and Stilico was alſo able to reſiſt all the efforts of Alaric. Rome was however now deemed too much expoſed to the different enemies who ravaged or threatened Italy; and Ravenna from henceforth became the ſeat of government.

From the year 400 to 423, when Honorius died, was one univerſal ſcene of war and deſolation in the Weſtern Empire: the barbarous nations of the North every where forming

themſelves, amidſt the moſt dreadful convulſions, into new kingdoms. Of theſe bloody revolutions there is no correct minute account, and I ſhall therefore only notice the material facts immediately connected with Honorius.

Honorius, ſurrounded with enemies, thought it prudent to give Alaric a ſum of money to retire. He then endeavoured to raiſe a ſufficient army; and to accompliſh it, every freeman who inrolled himſelf received a conſiderable bounty, whilſt every ſlave who entered the ſervice, was rewarded by obtaining his freedom.

Stilico about this time engaged 30,000 barbarians to enter into the ſervice of Honorius; with whom, however, he had ceaſed to be in favor. The Emperor therefore readily liſtened to ſome charges now made againſt his father in law, by Olympius the new miniſter. One of theſe, was a deſign to raiſe himſelf to the ſupreme power, by means of this body of mercenaries. Whether well or ill founded, Sti-

lico and his ſon, together with their friends and adherents, were executed, and Honorius at the ſame time put away the Empreſs. This was followed by a moſt barbarous and impolitic act. The mercenaries had brought with them their wives and children; who being lodged at ſome diſtance from the camp of their huſbands and fathers, a body of Roman ſoldiers cut them to pieces. This was no ſooner known to the 30,000, than they reſolved on vengeance: and in order to obtain it, they inſtantly marched to join Alaric who had re-entered Italy.

After ſome negociations which came to no effect, Alaric made himſelf maſter of Rome. He then declared Attalus, the Preſident of that city, Emperor; at the ſame time taking on himſelf the title of Commander of the Roman forces; and making his brother-in-law Ataulphus the Comes Domeſticorum.

The war between Honorius, Alaric, and Attalus continued for ſome time. At length Attalus and Alaric quarrelling, the former was depoſed, and Rome being given up to be plun-

dered, a part of it was burned, and many of it's citizens put to the ſword. On the death of Alaric, the Goths elected Ataulphus in his room. He for a time reſtored Attalus, but afterwards became the temporary ally of Honorius; during which, the latter, having got Attalus into his power, cut off his right hand, and baniſhed him to the iſland of Lipari. Ataulphus, ſometimes the friend, and ſometimes the enemy of Honorius, in the various wars that followed in the Empire, at laſt loſt his own life in Spain, where he was murdered by one of his domeſtics; not long after which Honorius died, after holding the ſceptre 28 years, reckoning from the death of his father.

I ſhall now give you a brief, but comprehenſive, view of the change in the Weſtern Empire in this eventful reign. Dacia, which comprehended the countries of Tranſylvania, Moldavia, Wallachia, and the eaſtern part of Upper Hungary, had been made, as you have before ſeen, a Roman province by Trajan. The general name of it's inhabitants was that of

Goths. But although all had the ſame language, cuſtoms and manners, they formed a number of diſtinct ſtates. The chief of theſe were the Oſtrogoths, Viſigoths, Vandals, Gepides, Lombards, Burgundians, and Alans. As the Roman Empire declined, theſe people turned on their conquerors, and from time to time obtained ſeats in the adjacent provinces. Beſide theſe Gothic nations, the Franks, Hunns and Suevians, who were ſtill more northern, alſo invaded the Empire with ſucceſs.

The new kingdoms, thus eſtabliſhed within the bounds of what had been the Weſtern Roman Empire, were as follows. The Vandals and a body of Alans who had joined them, poſſeſſed a ſmall part of Gaul, and a conſiderable territory in Spain. The Suevians under Ermeric their king, were alſo fixed in Spain, chiefly in Gallicia and Luſitania. The Viſigoths had Aquitaine, with Theodoric for their monarch. Sambida king of the Alans was eſtabliſhed in Gallia near the Rhine. The

Burgundians with whom a number of Saxons were blended, ſeated themſelves alſo near the Rhine and in Gallia Belgica under their ſovereign Gundicar. The Franks, called Salian, becauſe they came from the banks of the river Sala, were ſettled in Gallia. They were the leaſt barbarous of all theſe invaders, and ſome of the Salique laws, made by Pharamond who reigned in 423, are ſtill extant. Theſe Salique Franks were joined by many other Franks, and ſoon became extremely powerful. Britain alſo had become entirely ſeparate from the Empire, for it never acknowledged the Emperor of the Weſt after the reign of Honorius. The Hunns were ſettled in Pannonia under their kings Octar and Rugila; as were alſo the Lombards, under Agilmund their ſovereign. Thus prior to the year 423 nine kingdoms were formed out of what was taken from Honorius, and the preceding Emperors.

John the ſecretary to the late Emperor ſeized the ſceptre, till it was reſtored by the Eaſtern Emperor to Valentinian the Third, as I have

elſewhere mentioned. He being a minor, his mother Placidia was impowered to adminiſter public affairs. She chiefly confided in Aetius and Felix, though Bonifacius, who commanded in Africa, was ſtill higher in her eſtimation. This was well known to the others, who therefore formed a conſpiracy againſt him. By their plots he was induced to revolt, as the only means of ſelf-defence. Forces were of courſe ſent againſt him, on which he applied to Genſeric, king of the Vandals then eſtabliſhed in Spain. This monarch, glad of getting a footing in the fertile provinces of Africa, inſtantly complied, and thus aided, Bonifacius bade defiance to his enemies.

Placidia, finding ſhe had been deceived, and fearing the total loſs of the African provinces, now wrote to Bonifacius, promiſing him a full reſtoration to her favor, if he gave up his new alliance. This he joyfully embraced, and uſed every means in his power to prevail on Genſeric to return to Spain. But Genſeric, inſtead of doing ſo, cut moſt of the

Roman troops to pieces, and though Bonifacius received ſuccours both from the Eaſtern and Weſtern Empires, he was obliged to abandon Africa. On his return to Italy a civil war took place between him and Aetius, the latter refuſing to give up the command of the army, though ordered by the Empreſs. In this conteſt Bonifacius fell, and Aetius was reſtored to favor.

A peace was concluded with Genſeric in the year 435, by which very little more than Carthage, and the diſtrict belonging to it, was retained to Valentinian in Africa, and hoſtilities in a ſhort time recommencing, Genſeric not only made himſelf maſter of what had been ſo reſerved, but he likewiſe ravaged Sicily with impunity.

Whilſt Genſeric was thus haſtening the deſtruction of the Weſtern Empire in one quarter, a ſtill more dreadful enemy was ariſing in another. This was Attila king of the Hunns, who had, by treaty and force of arms, got a number of Northern barbarous nations to re-

pair to his ſtandard. Thus prepared, he demanded Honoria, the ſiſter of Valentinian, in marriage, with half of what remained of the Weſtern Empire for her portion. Honoria, who was a vicious profligate woman, was the ſuggeſter of this plan, ſhe having previouſly made overtures of marriage, which Attila had acceded to.

Valentinian, having refuſed compliance, found allies where he leaſt expected them. Theſe were the Viſigoths, Franks and others, who had fixed themſelves in the Empire. They conſidered Attila, with the diſtant Northern nations who followed him, as dangerous to themſelves. They therefore joined their forces to thoſe under Aetius, and a dreadful battle took place at Chalons, where 300,000 are ſaid to have been left dead upon the field: after which Attila, who had the worſt of it, retired into Pannonia.

Having recruited his forces, Attila recommenced hoſtilities, entering Italy by the way of Venetia, the inhabitants flying before

him, and taking ſhelter in the iſlands on which the city of Venice was afterwards erected. Valentinian now ſolicited and obtained a truce, on which Attila marched into Gaul. There he received an overthrow from Thoriſmond, king of the Viſigoths, which he did not long ſurvive: and great diſſenſions following in his family, the powerful combination which he had formed ſoon melted away.

Heraclius a eunuch, and a man named Maximus, had now become the chief favorites of Valentinian. Theſe villains perſuaded him that Aetius was aiming at the purple; and that brave general, with his known friends, being invited to an entertainment, were treacherouſly murdered. But Valentinian, who was both weak and wicked, ſoon after loſt his own life, by means of Maximus, whoſe wife he had debauched. Heraclius was alſo cut off, and Maximus, having no opponent, was acknowledged in what remained of the Weſtern Empire, which was now confined to Italy. This happened in the year 455, and Maximus com-

menced his reign with a double act of tyranny, forcing Eudoxia, the widow of Valentinian, to become his wife, and her daughter to enter into the ſame connexion with his ſon.

Eudoxia, thus outraged beyond all bearing, ſecretly applied to Genſeric, to come and avenge her and her family's wrongs. Nothing could be more acceptable to him than ſuch an invitation. He inſtantly prepared a powerful armament, and landed in Italy. Maximus, inſtead of defending Rome, where he then was, would have abandoned it, had not the populace ſeized and executed him. Genſeric then entered that city on the 15th of June 455, without any oppoſition, plundering it for 14 days ſucceſſively, and although he profeſſed Chriſtianity, he did not ſpare even the moſt ſacred places. Having thus acquired an immenſe ſpoil, he returned to Africa, carrying Eudoxia and her two daughters with him, one of the latter being afterwards married to his ſon Hunneric.

Avitus who now got himſelf acknowledged by the army as Emperor, ſent Ricimer his admiral with a conſiderable force, to prevent a new invaſion threatened by Genſeric. In this he proved ſucceſsful, but on his return he had Avitus depoſed, and inſtead of aſſuming the purple himſelf, he conferred it on a man named Majorianus. This revolution had ſcarcely taken place, when Ricimer was obliged to ſail with a freſh armament againſt Genſeric, whom he obliged to enter into an agreement to ceaſe hoſtilities. Ricimer, who at this time did what he pleaſed in the ſmall remnant of the Empire, having taken offence with the conduct of Majorianus, put him to death, and again refrained from ſeizing on the throne, conferring it on one Severus. He being perfectly ſubmiſſive to Ricimer, was permitted to reign till 465, when he died, not without a ſuſpicion of its being brought about by poiſon. Anthemius, the ſon-in-law of Marcian, Emperor of the Eaſt, was now appointed, giving a daughter in marriage to Ricimer, as had been before ſtipulated.

Genſeric having extended his attacks to the Greek iſlands, the two Emperors united againſt him. The joint armament was extremely formidable, and began with great ſucceſs. But Genſeric, partly by his exertions, and partly by bribery, turned the ſcale, and their forces, after ſuffering ſeverely, were obliged to return, without having gained any permanent advantage. It was on this occaſion that the Eaſtern Emperor loſt 50,000 men, as I have elſewhere obſerved.

Ricimer again wiſhed to make a new Empeperor, and putting his father-in-law to death, he conferred the purple on a man named Olybrius, who, with the conſent of Genſeric, had married Placidia, a daughter of Eudoxia. Ricimer did not long ſurvive this act, and the Emperor laſt created by him alſo dying, Glycerius, the Comes Domeſticorum, put himſelf at the head of the expiring ſtate. He had for a competitor Nepos, a perſon of ſome conſequence, and who being ſupported by the Eaſtern Emperor, proved ſucceſsful. But Oreſtes,

his chief general, revolting, he abandoned his ſituation, and was ſucceeded by Romulus Auguſtus, afterwards nicknamed Auguſtulus. This Prince was the ſon of Oreſtes, who preferred his elevation to his own.

From the death of Valentinian the third, the fall of what remained of the Weſtern Empire was wonderfully rapid. Indeed after the year 455, when Genſeric pillaged Rome, it could ſcarcely be ſaid to have exiſted. Almoſt the whole of its armies were from thenceforth mercenary barbarians. The moſt powerful of theſe was a body of the Heruli, under Odoacer their leader. He was a man of ſtrong underſtanding, and clearly ſaw he had nothing to do, to ſecure Italy to himſelf, but to gain over the other mercenaries. This he eaſily accompliſhed, and having done ſo, he ſeized Oreſtes and put him to death; after which he depoſed and impriſoned his ſon. Thus expired the Weſtern Roman Empire in the year 476; and it is ſomewhat remarkable, that the laſt of its Princes ſhould bear the name of Romulus, the

founder of Rome, and of Auguſtus, who firſt eſtabliſhed the Imperial dignity.

I ſhall now briefly ſtate to you the ſituation of the new kingdoms that had ariſen in the Weſt. The Vandals had entirely abandoned Spain, following Genſeric to Africa, and there forming a powerful kingdom, in what had been the Weſtern Roman Provinces. The Suevians, who made themſelves maſters of thoſe territories relinquiſhed by the Vandals, were nearly poſſeſſed of all Spain, till the Viſigoths, under Theodoric, drove them from a part of it about the year 455. The Burgundians under their king Gundobaldus, who began his reign in 473, had conſiderably extended their original territory. The Alans did the ſame, and even attempted conqueſts on the Italian ſide of the Alps, though without effect. The Franks, under Clodio the ſucceſſor of Pharamond, became very powerful; a great body of other Franks coming from beyond the Rhine. Theſe laſt, however, continued diſtinct, being governed by their own princes,

during the reigns of Clodio and his ſucceſſors, Merovæus and Childeric, the laſt of whom was on the throne, at the depoſition of Auguſtulus.

The Britains, in the year 456, had Vortigern for their king; all the Roman forces having before been withdrawn. Theſe unhappy people had been prevented the uſe of arms; and they were now unable to reſiſt their warlike neighbours in the north of the iſland, who had, in fact, never ſubmitted to the Roman yoke, and who were a brave and hardy race, known by the name of Picts, Scots and Caledonians, but whom I ſhall hereafter call the Scotch. The Britons in vain ſolicited the return of the Roman legions; and being every where ſlaughtered when they oppoſed the Scotch, numbers fled into Gaul, where they gave the name of Britany to the part they ſettled in. Thoſe who remained at home, unable to defend themſelves, applied to the Anglo-Saxons for aid. The latter were, at this time, in poſſeſſion of Weſtphalia, Saxony, Eaſt and Weſt Friſeland, Holland and Zealand; and they

gladly accepted the invitation. Hengiſt and Horſa, who claimed to be deſcended from their god Woden, were the leaders of thoſe that arrived: and being as fierce and warlike as the Scotch, they quickly repelled their invaſion.

The Britons now wiſhed the Saxons to retire; but they were too well pleaſed with their new ſituation to relinquiſh it: and in the year 476, a conteſt had already commenced between them and the Britons, who had at that time Aurelius Ambroſius for their monarch.

The original Hunns, who ſettled in Panonia, were joined by others from beyond the Danube about the year 433. Theſe laſt comers had two brothers, Attila and Bleda, for their leaders, to whom the firſt ſettlers alſo yielded obedience. In the year 444, Attila acquired the ſole power by ſlaying his brother. He alſo, by one means orother, got a number of Scythian tribes to follow his fortunes; and you have ſeen how terrible he became to both the Roman Empires. But on his death, a civil war commenced between his ſons; during which, all the tribes

that had joined the Hunns ſeparated from them. Thus weakened, they were expelled Pannonia, and the Oſtrogoths obtained their ſeats. This effectually humbled the Hunns for the preſent, but we ſhall again find them powerful. The Lombards continued in their firſt ſettlements, and had Gudehoc for their king, at the cloſe of this æra.

This total change of the Weſtern Empire had been gradually coming on, and, from the different ſituations of the invaders, and the invaded, might have been eaſily foreſeen, tho' perhaps it could not have been prevented. The nations of Europe ſubdued by Julius Cæſar, and the other Roman generals, were remarkable for their warlike and independant ſpirit. But when once they ſubmitted to the yoke, that ſpirit dwindled away; and tho' they received the arts and poliſh of their conquerors, they were reduced by ſlavery to an effeminacy truly degrading.

The Roman armies ſoon loſt their ſuperiority, when they ceaſed to be compoſed of free-

men, who voluntarily enrolled themſelves. They were, after the exaltation of Auguſtus, mere mercenaries, who, in fact, commanded their leaders; and who, in general, preferred ſloth and idleneſs to the toils of war. The treaſury, exhauſted by the civil diſſenſions and by the accumulated expences of the Emperors and Cæſars, was not able to afford the neceſſary levies. And the religious quarrels, firſt between the Pagans and Chriſtians, and latterly among the Chriſtians themſelves, greatly tended to weaken the ſtate.

On the other hand, the invaders, known by the general name of Goths and Vandals; unacquainted with the refinements of life, and delighting in rapine, plunder, and war, were more vigorous in their bodies, and vaſtly ſuperior in numbers. The enervated, and now ill-diſciplined, Roman legions were unable to oppoſe them. And from time to time yielding to their irreſiſtible impulſe, the ſmall remains of the real Roman force were utterly unable

to make head againſt Odoacer and the mercenaries who had revolted from the Emperor.

The nations that had been enſlaved by the Romans, when abandoned by them, were able to make a very feeble reſiſtance. Such as did not periſh in the field, or by the cruelty of the ſavage nations that ſubdued them, were ſunk into the loweſt ſtate of ſlavery. Under the Romans, tho' deprived of freedom, they had various comforts, and ſome even of the elegancies of life. But now, their cities and public edifices were for the moſt part deſtroyed: and everyart—every accompliſhment—every convenience—and every work of literature—that had accompanied their more poliſhed maſters, were utterly annihilated.

The form of government of the laſt invaders was a military democracy. Their kings and principal officers were choſen for their ſuperior ſkill and courage. The Monarch and thoſe officers decided on common matters: but on great occaſions, the conſent of the people, or

rather of the army, every one capable of bearing arms being a ſoldier, was neceſſary.

As theſe Goths and Vandals were now to rule over ſlaves, they made ſuch alterations, as would enable them to maintain their ſuperiority. The lands were divided amongſt them, together with the ſlaves that inhabited them. Each got in proportion to his rank, and all were to take the field, in their reſpective capacities, when internal inſurrection or foreign invaſion ſhould require it. In regard to civil regulations, they had in fact, at this time, none. Every man became the avenger of his private wrongs, or of his own accord left it to arbitration. And as to the ſlaves, each landholder exerciſed the moſt deſpotic authority over his own. Such was the origin of the feudal ſyſtem, which I ſhall hereafter have further occaſion to notice.

The leaders of theſe barbarous invaders, tho' they enſlaved the people at large, whom they conquered, paid reſpect to the clergy; probably from the influence they perceived them

to have over their flocks. In return, the clergy accommodated matters ſo, as to make the ceremonies of the Church ſo like Pagan, that Chriſtianity was embraced by nearly all the principal barbarians; even before the expiration of the Weſtern Empire.

From the death of Conſtantine, to the year 476, but few poets appeared; and of theſe, Claudianus, Paulinus, Nonnius and Prudentius were the moſt diſtinguiſhed. In hiſtory, Eutropius, Quintus Curtius, Lampridus, Eunapias, Victor, Zoſimus and Marcellinus, were the beſt. Pappus wrote on philoſophy and mathematics. Horapollo on Egyptian hieroglyphics. Obſequence on prodigies. Vegetius on military affairs. Symmachus againſt Chriſtianity. Ben Napthali Jacob, a famous Rabbi, made the underſtanding of Hebrew eaſier, by inventing points to ſtand as vowels. Heliodorus wrote the Romance of Theogenes and Chariclea, which is ſuppoſed to be the beſt compoſition of that kind. Macrobius was able as a critic and antiquarian. Stobæus on the an-

cient writers, poets and philoſophers. The moſt famous of the philoſophers, called latter Platoniſts, were the two Jamblicus's, Proclus, Hierocles, and a lady called Hypatia. The latter was ſo learned and eminent, that ſhe ſucceeded her father Theon, as head of the celebrated Platonic ſchool at Alexandria. Libanus, an eminent ſophiſt, wrote epiſtles and orations much eſteemed. Simplicius and Themiſtius were the chief of the Peripatetic philoſophers; and Servius and Stephanus were alſo learned men.

Beſides the authors I have mentioned, there were a number who wrote and preached on Chriſtian ſubjects. Of theſe, the moſt conſpicuous were St. Baſil, Chryſoſtom, the two Cyrills, Epiphanius, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory Nyſſen, Optatus, Palladius, Hilarius, Syneſius and Theodoret, all of whom were Biſhops. Of thoſe inferior in rank in the church, were Lactantius, the moſt eloquent of all the fathers; and who, from the eloquence of his writings, is called the Chriſtian Cicero, St. Au-

guſtine, Jerom, Didymus, St. Ephrem, Firmicus Maternus, St. Iſidore, Oroſius, Salvianus, Philoſtorgius, Sidonius, Socrates, Sozomenius and Sulpicius; the five laſt of whom were eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians, as was alſo Theodoret, the biſhop before mentioned.

The chief Sectaries, that aroſe after the death of Conſtantine, to the expiration of the Weſtern Empire, were the Eunomians, followers of Eunomius, biſhop of Cyzicum; the Donatiſts, who obſerved the tenets of Donatus, an African biſhop; and the Pelagians, who had for their leader Pelagius, an Engliſh abbot.

LETTER SIXTH.

LET us now contemplate what followed the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity, as the religion of the Roman Empire. The firſt and moſt viſible effect was a vaſt increaſe of wealth and power to the clergy. The next, that having the heathens no longer to contend with, they gave themſelves up to endleſs diſputes about paſſages in ſcripture, which it has pleaſed God to cover with a veil, as yet impenetrable to man. The greateſt and moſt univerſal of theſe controverſies was between the Arians and Trinitarians as to the nature of the Deity. The Chriſtian Emperors generally took a part, and according to the ſide they were of, the one or the other was more or leſs perſecuted. The congregations were almoſt every where divided, and had two biſhops, the one in office, and the other in exile; and numbers on both ſides were put to death. The true nature of Chriſt was alſo a moſt fertile ſubject for argument, and the pure

and ſimple doctrines which he had made alone neceſſary for ſalvation, were almoſt forgotten.

It appears to me, that one great ſource of theſe diſſenſions was the love of money and the purſuits of ambition. Biſhopricks had become both rich and powerful; and the inferior clergy were alſo well provided for. To the ſame cauſes I impute the variety of mummeries now introduced, for all of them had a tendency to increaſe the influence, or enrich the pockets, of the prieſthood. The worſhip of ſaints and relics had juſt dawned—pilgrimages to Jeruſalem and to the tombs of martyrs were already deemed holy. Celibacy to certain orders of the clergy was lately enjoined. Young women were alſo taught to devote themſelves to perpetual virginity. Public proceſſions, and the uſe of ſacred water was commenced. The bones of martyrs and the figure of the croſs were now ſuppoſed to have peculiar efficacy. Image worſhip alſo began to prevail, the ſouls of theſe holy men to whom they were erected, being ſuppoſed to enter into them, and to be able to

make effectual applications to heaven. Auricular confeſſion, which was alſo in certain inſtances enjoined, was a great acceſſion to the clergy, and the doctrine of purgatory ſtill more ſo, it being inculcated that the ſtay of the ſoul there depended on the maſſes to be ſaid by the prieſts.

In the Eaſt two orders of monks had been inſtituted. One of theſe called Cænobites lived in communities which had abbots for their chief directors. The other called Eremites, dwelt in ſolitude, at the ſame time afflicting themſelves by various auſterities, and both of theſe by degrees were introduced into the Weſt. There were others in the Eaſt, who dedicated themſelves to paſs their lives on pillars, or in cages. Of the pillar ſaints, Simeon Stylites was the firſt in reputation, having paſſed 36 years in that kind of mortification. The mode was, never to leave a pillar except for a higher, and the laſt that Simeon mounted was ſixty feet high, and on which he continued till he died, having his ſuſtenance conveyed to him. Of the

cage ſaints, Baradatus was the moſt excellent, living for many years in one in which he could not ſtand erect. You may conjecture to what a wretched ſtate Chriſtianity was now reduced, when theſe two men were deemed by the multitude, to be the moſt pious Chriſtians of the Eaſt.

When we recollect the Pagan nations as to their idols and demi-gods, with the practices of many of their prieſts, together with their proceſſions, luſtrations, veſtal virgins, &c. we can eaſily trace from whence theſe ſtrange abominations ſprung; and I believe there are few of the Papal or Greek ceremonies that have not a Pagan origin.

In days of ſuperſtition, impoſture, and ignorance, one reads with peculiar pleaſure, an account of men who dare to ſtem the torrent. Such a man was Jovinian, who flouriſhed towards the end of the fourth century. He boldly aſſerted, that all the ceremonies then introduced were at leaſt uſeleſs, and that he who lived up to his baptiſmal vow, and kept the precepts

of the goſpel, muſt obtain ſalvation. This was however, deemed heretical by a council held at Milan in 390, and Jovinian was ſent into baniſhment.

There is one obſervation that almoſt equally applies to the Greek and Latin churches. For the firſt two or three centuries after Chriſt, the reaſoning and philoſophy of Plato was greatly in faſhion, and many Chriſtians endeavoured to make it conformable to their religion. But now Ariſtotle had driven Plato out of the field, his ſubtilties being better ſuited to the myſtical diſputes, in which all the clergy were more or leſs involved.

Having thus conſidered the Chriſtian church at large, I ſhall proceed to the riſe of the papal power. Even before the reign of Conſtantine the Great, ſome faint efforts were made, at a ſort of pre-eminence in the ſee of Rome, on account of that city being the capital of the Empire. But the moſt ſtriking attempt prior to the year 400 was by Damaſus its biſhop. In the year 378 or 379 he obtained an edict from

the Emperors Gratian and Valentinian, in favour of his ſupremacy in matters of eccleſiaſtical controverſy. This, however, by no means proved effectual either under him or his immediate ſucceſſors; and Leo the Iſt. ſurnamed the Great, who obtained the ſee of Rome in the year 440, moſt diligently exerted himſelf to eſtabliſh the papal ſupremacy. He therefore applied to Valentinian III. and in the year 445 obtained from him an edict which recited the ſupremacy of the biſhop of Rome in eccleſiaſtical affairs, as a thing before eſtabliſhed, and at the ſame time enjoined unconditional obedience to his authority. In purſuance of this, we find the legates of Leo preſiding in the council of Chalcedon in 451, which was an Œcumenical one, and to which all the Chriſtian biſhops of both Empires were ſummoned. They condemned Dioſcorus a biſhop, and in doing ſo, theſe remarkable words were uſed: "Leo the moſt holy archbiſhop of great and "old Rome by us (his legates) and this ſacred "aſſembly, together with the moſt bleſſed

"apoſtle St. Peter, who is the rock, the ground "of the Catholic Church, and the foundation "of the true faith, bereaveth him of all his "dignity." Here then is an expreſs exertion of the biſhop of Rome's ſuperiority as the ſucceſſor of St. Peter. Another declaration of this aſſembly proves, however, that ſuch allegations were a novelty, for it afterwards declared the ſee of Conſtantinople, next in place, and equal in dignity to that of Rome. This ſo highly offended Leo, that he directly applied to the Eaſtern Emperor, who obliged Anatalius the then patriarch of Conſtantinople to write to Leo, that he was ready to execute whatever his holineſs ſhould command, and that the validity of what had been done at the council, depended on being confirmed by him. Thus the ambition of Leo ſo far ſucceeded as to obtain an acknowledgment of ſupremacy in eccleſiaſtical matters from both the Emperors; and when the ſee of Conſtantinople thus allowed it alſo, it may be ſaid to have been at leaſt acquieſced in by the clergy.

As the Imperial power declined, that of the Biſhop of Rome encreaſed, and after Genſeric took and ſacked that city in 455, the authority of ſubſequent Emperors was rather nominal than real, the wealth and influence of Leo, and his ſucceſſors, being in fact greater than theirs. Leo alſo increaſed the power of the Church by enjoining Celibacy to the clergy, thereby ſeparating them from the Laity; and attaching them more cloſely to the Papal juriſdiction.

Leo was ſucceeded in 461 by Hilarius, whoſe ſupremacy was fully acknowledged by many of the Weſtern Biſhops: and Simplicius who next filled the Papal chair ſtill further eſtabliſhed his power, by appointing ſome of the moſt conſiderable Biſhops his Vicars. This gave them very great authority in the diſtricts reſpectively committed to their care: and they naturally became the ſtrenuous ſupporters of thoſe from whom they derived it. A great con eſt at this time aroſe with Acacius Biſhop of Conſtantinople. He was ſo great a favo-

rite with Leo the Eaſtern Emperor, that he gave him a place in the ſenate, being the firſt Biſhop who ever ſat there; and Leo would alſo, if he could have done it, have made him ſuperior to Simplicius. On the other hand Simplicius endeavoured to give precedency to the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, as being prior in the time of their appointment. And from thence forward there were various conteſts between the poſſeſſors of the chair of St. Peter, and the Patriarch of Conſtantinople. But the Pope never was in fact permanently acknowledged by the biſhops or clergy of the Eaſtern Empire.

It is curious to obſerve, that as Rome loſt her power in temporal ſovereignty, ſhe regained it in ſpiritual influence. And though all the kingdoms that compoſed the Weſtern Empire, threw off the Imperial yoke, yet, throughout them all, however different in origin or language, the Papal authority to a certain degree became acknowledged.

I have thus ſtated the progreſs of the Papacy to the year 476, in which you muſt per-

ceive it the uniform object of the Popes, and the Clergy, by every artifice to add to their wealth and conſequence. In theſe purſuits, the Eaſterns, as far as circumſtances permitted, alſo joined: and at the concluſion of my preſent æra, true Chriſtianity no doubt was felt by many, but it was not to be ſeen in any eſtabliſhment in the world.

SEVENTH LETTER.

IN this part of Univerſal Hiſtory, the inſtability of Empire muſt peculiarly ſtrike you. At the beginning of that æra, which we have been treating of, the Roman was the greateſt that had ever ariſen, and it had juſt paſt the ſummit of its power: yet in the year 476, behold that half of it, which went by the name of Weſtern, abſolutely annihilated. There is this ſingularity alſo which attended its deſtruction; that it was not brought about by any other Empire that had ariſen to greatneſs, but by a number of barbarous nations, not even in union with each other, and who had not been heard of at the commencement of the Chriſtian æra. It will naturally occur to you, that theſe ſwarms that iſſued from the Northern hive is an additional evidence, of what I have from time to time endeavoured to impreſs: I mean the infancy, and progreſſive ſtate, of nations and of mankind.

At the death of Chriſt, all the literature—all the elegant arts—and all the luxuries and conveniencies of life, then known in the world, were nearly, if not altogether, confined to the Roman Empire. But now in the ſmall period of four centuries and a half, in the Weſtern part they may be ſaid to have been totally overthrown, Rome, and a few places in Italy, excepted. And even in the Eaſtern diviſion, they were for the moſt part at a very low ebb, owing to religious diſſenſions, and to the interior inſurrections, and the exterior attacks of their numerous enemies.

But there is nothing I wiſh you ſo much to attend to at this period, as the overthrow of the Heathen deities—the ſilencing of the Oracles—and the abolition of the Pagan worſhip throughout the Roman Empire. Theſe deities—theſe Oracles—theſe rites, had been eſtabliſhed from the earlieſt period of profane hiſtory. They were inſtituted, or received, by the moſt poliſhed nations of the earth, the Jews alone excepted; and when Chriſt was

born, the Heathen world was at its ſummit. Let me aſk then who were the champions of Chriſtianity againſt all the learning of the world—the eſtabliſhed idolatry of ages—the whole body of the Heathen Prieſthood, and even the arm of Empire itſelf? It was Chriſt, to external appearance, the ſon of a carpenter—it was his Apoſtles, men of no education, and taken from the humbleſt ſituations of life. In the common courſe of human affairs, it was abſolutely impoſſible, for ſuch means, without attempting external force, to have overthrown the ruling ſuperſtitions: and the ſucceſs of Chriſtianity under ſuch circumſtances, is alone ſufficient to ſtamp it with divinity.

That good and evil exiſt—that they are combating with each other—and that man is the ſubject of their contention—has been in every age and in every nation aſſented to, by the great body of mankind. Let us then enquire into the account of the interference of the ſpiritual world, given by ſacred writ, and then exa-

mine how far the profane hiſtorians accord. But if all agree, in a former open and avowed connexion between the ſpiritual and natural world, you will aſk, how does it happen that ſo many now deny it? It is becauſe the nature of that connexion has varied.—It is becauſe ſimilar miracles, to thoſe which Moſes and Chriſt performed are not now to be ſeen—it is becauſe thoſe Oracles that before darkly predicted future events have long ſince been ſilenced. It is becauſe the power of magicians, ſoothſayers, ſorcerers, and other diviners, has been taken away. Theſe differences in regard to the particular ages of the world are for wiſe purpoſes, which I hope to explain to you at the concluſion of this hiſtory.

From the ſacred writings we learn, that prior to the creation of this world, there was a fall in Heaven, at the head of which was the evil ſpirit called Satan. We alſo find that on the tranſgreſſion of Adam, a change took place both as to man and the world, and that the evil ſpirits from thenceforth poſſeſſed a power

over human affairs that was not before permitted. God's power was however ſuperior, whenever he choſe to exert it; as in the caſe of Noah's flood, and the various miracles wrought in favor of the Iſraelites. We alſo read that in ſome inſtances there was an immediate communication between God and man, for inſtance with Moſes and Abraham; and a ſtill more frequent intercourſe between men and angels. So likewiſe doth the Old Teſtament record a communication between men and the evil ſpirits; magicians, witche , and other kinds of divination, being particularly pointed out in various places. With all theſe things the New Teſtament alſo agrees, and in it we find ſtill further, that numbers were actually poſſeſſed of evil ſpirits, who knew the Son of God, and who aſked him was he come to torment them before his time. This alſo proves the conteſt between good and evil, and in the end the complete overthrow of the latter. It alſo appears from the New Teſtament, that at the time of Chriſt's firſt comi g, Satan

was ſtiled the Prince of this world, and exerciſed authority over it. The conflict was however then to begin, which was in the courſe of time to end in the deſtruction of his power, when the kingdoms of this world were to become the kingdoms of the Meſſiah. But this was to be a long and obſtinate conteſt, for Chriſt tells his diſciples that they had not only men to combat, but alſo the principalities and powers of darkneſs.

In profane hiſtory the accounts, as to ſupernatural powers, perfectly coincide. The Greeks and Romans, the moſt enlightened of the heathen nations, ſuppoſed the ſpirits of their Deities, to enter into their reſpective images, and to hear their petitions. They believed in the inſpiration of their oracles, and it would have been ſtrange if they had not, becauſe whoever examines the accompliſhment of many of their predictions muſt ſee, that they did poſſeſs a dark knowledge of futurity. We find alſo the ſoothſayers, augurs, aruſpices, aſtrologers and magicians, univerſally conſulted: and from the

moſt enlightened hiſtorians of the moſt enlightened days of the Heathens, we kuow that theſe men did foretel the riſe and fall of the greateſt men of antiquity. See then, to what infidelity is reduced! For it is not only the Sacred Writings they deny, but alſo the teſtimony of almoſt every author, worthy of peruſal, that exiſted prior to the revival of literature in the 15th century.

Having thus, I hope, eſtabliſhed the warfare of good and evil, of which man is the ſubject, I ſhall now endeavour to trace its progreſs to the year 476. Behold then, at this period, thoſe Oracles which had been revered for ages, ſilenced. Behold thoſe deities, which had been immemorially adored, caſt from their temples, and thoſe temples deſtroyed, or converted to places of worſhip for the true God. Behold the heathen prieſthood and rites alſo aboliſhed throughout the Empire: and tho' we hear of magic, ſorcery, and other infernal arts, ſtill ſecretly practiſed, they were no longer publicly allowed. But the Evil Spirits, tho' they

ceaſed to be openly worſhipped, formed a new conteſt, more inſidious and equally dangerous to mankind. It was the perverſion of Chriſtianity, and you have elſewhere ſeen the ſucceſs, with which it was attended.

This perverſion of the Religion of Chriſt, has been uſed by infidelity as an argument againſt it's truth. But theſe unbelievers, either wilfully conceal, or have not taken the trouble of informing themſelves, that thiswas by thoſe very Scriptures fully predicted. It therefore becomes an evidence for, and not againſt, Chriſtianity. This I ſhall hereafter more fully explain, and with it combine ſuch a chain of proof, as will, I flatter myſelf, give you the ſame conviction that I feel myſelf: a conviction as full to my underſtanding, as my own exiſtence.

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.

MUSEUM BRITANNICUM